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THESIS

THE COMMAND AND CONTROL
OF
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

by

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December 1996

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THE COMMAND AND CONTROL OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

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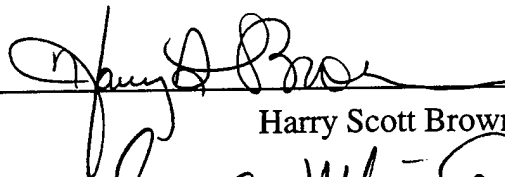
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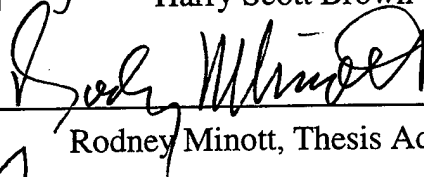
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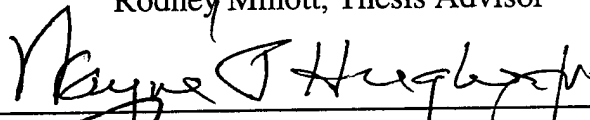


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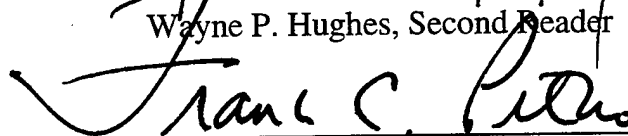
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ABSTRACT

Today integrated operations are a prime requirement of Special Operations Forces (SOF) and General Purpose Forces (GPF) of all services. None can unilaterally conduct operations because of strategic lift and logistic limitations. No unit is capable of all types of missions nor should any unit or its leadership believe it is capable of all types of missions. SOF must become more able to integrate jointly with all branches and services to secure its future effectiveness.

This thesis looks at historical examples of four integrated operations and illustrates some definitive problems associated with them. It shows how four variables are especially significant to all levels of an operation. These variables may affect the outcome of operations significantly enough to be considered essential. The thesis summarizes the problems associated with each operation and looks at some future implications for joint warfare.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In studying the role of command and control (C2) this thesis will concentrate on the topic of Special Operations Forces (SOF) and how they were employed prior to and after the creation of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). The future of military operations seems to indicate a world in which forces will need to be integrated. This integration will be between General Purpose Forces (GPF) and Special Operations Forces (SOF) as well as various other organizations. Cooperation is a must in all operations in business or in military operations. A need for routine is helpful to any organization in day to day activities. The creation of new procedures for certain missions may cause a great deal of consternation. Previously, the US military has done just this and the broad outcome is only known in pieces (e.g., public opinion, strategic importance, weapons systems performance). Few people look wholly at C2 in SOF. This thesis will look almost entirely at C2 and its ability to enhance or hinder operations. It will also briefly look at the organizational barriers to jointness. This study will observe C2's effects on SOF within integrated operations. It will do so by examining four strategic operations with differing outcomes and using current doctrine to analyze the performance of USSOCOM in each. The operations chosen for this work are short duration, direct action missions in either semi-permissive or non-permissive environments at either the operational or strategic levels of war or in operations other than war (OOTW). Specifically, this thesis will examine SOF participation in Desert One, Grenada (Urgent Fury), Panama (Just Cause), and Somalia to determine the effectiveness of C2. Emphasis will be placed on two integrated areas of the principles of war - unity of command and simplicity. Unity of command is looked at with regard to impartiality toward the needs and capabilities of all forces represented. Simplicity is concerned with overly complicated plans and their deconfliction. Both unity of

command and simplicity illustrate possible ways to improve the planning and execution of future operations.

In a previous work on integrated operations, Michael Kershaw acknowledges the relationship between command and training and a special unit's ability to integrate with GPF. He does limit his analysis to the development of a theory of integrated operations. The relation of command and its significance on shaping a missions success is discussed. This thesis will conclude with judgment on SOCOM's effectiveness and some possible future implications.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE PROBLEM

Today the core idea of command is becoming forgotten. Terms with more currency have arisen to meet technological needs. Command, control and communication (C3), command, control, communication and computers (C4) and finally command, control, communication, computers and intelligence (C4I) are the sporty terminology in the light of today's technology. Currently, commanders are managing staffs, that in turn are attempting to process data for dissemination as intelligence. It is a very complex endeavor that taxes even the most efficient military organization.

This analysis does not try to justify the existence of Special Operations (SO), assuming the readers to be versed in these arguments. This paper examines the effectiveness of the command of SOF. Success and failure are very subjective and are avoided in this thesis. The phenomenon of command is used to judge effectiveness. We look at the effects of command on the commonly perceived problems of four operations. These problems should develop a basis to judge the command effectiveness of USSOCOM with regard to one area of its mission. This area is interoperability of equipment and forces.

There are nine different variables used to explain the basic principles of war. They are listed as follows: objective, mass, offensive, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise, and simplicity. In this thesis, four variables will be emphasized. They are problems and successes relating to unity of command, unity of effort, simplicity and timing. Each will be observed for its effects on an operation. These variables were chosen due to their applicability as exemplified by doctrine and used by officers and enlisted of all the services.

Unity of Command encompasses two concepts: first, it is the idea of the commander who must not succumb to parochial or local preoccupations (such as not being preoccupied with

Marine Corp solutions if his or her service is the Marine Corps). Second, it concerns the development of a unified team. This means ensuring that subordinate commanders know and understand the commander's intent and work together to achieve it.

Unity of Effort applies to every echelon, starting with the National Security Council. There, development of strategies becomes the national military strategy by which the National Command Authority develops military strength. Strategy involves understanding the desired policy goals for a projected operation; (ie., what should be the desired state of affairs when the conflict is terminated)?¹ The overall importance of this type of unity is given only cursory attention in most service manuals. Joint publications put greater emphasis on unity due to the importance of integrated operations on the battlefield.

Simplicity of command is the avoidance of too many layers between the commander and the operational units. It also suggests that the plan be kept as simple as possible.

Lastly, Timing is the idea of pace. Linking Pace and its interaction with relative superiority as written by William McRaven in Spec Ops. Relative superiority is the condition that exists when an attacking force gains a decisive advantage over a larger well-defended enemy.² This is that a small window of surprise exists for a narrow window of time. During this narrow window the attacking force has for a moment relative superiority over the enemy.

¹ Joint Warfare of the US Armed Forces, Joint Pub 1, 11 November 1991, US Government Printing Office, Wash, DC, ISBN 0-16-035987-2, p. 21.

² William McRaven, *Spec Ops*, Presidio Books, Novato Ca, 1995, p. 4.

B. BACKGROUND

Effectively integrated joint forces expose no weak points or seams to enemy action, while they rapidly and efficiently find and attack enemy weak points.³

History presents many examples illustrating integrated operations of both Special Operations Forces (SOF) and General Purpose Forces (GPF). Integration did not always result from a smooth meshing of capabilities. Examples of such integration include: the midget submarine X-craft raids of WWII in which the cooperation of conventional submarine units to transport the smaller craft to their release areas was first used.⁴ A second example was the rescue of Italy's deposed dictator Benito Mussolini in Operation Oak, where German regular forces coupled with elite forces were utilized to provide security during his rescue.⁵ Today, arguably this type of capability must be present, "...the US Armed Forces must always be ready to operate as smoothly functioning joint teams."⁶ Present force structure has increased the need for these integrated operations. Most operations are executed at the joint level. Recent examples abound as in the cases of Grenada, Panama, Desert Storm, Haiti, and Somalia. Few units are equipped or staffed to handle the logistics of mission execution in their entirety. Joint force commanders choose the capabilities they need from the air, land, sea, space, and special operations forces at their disposal.⁷ Integrated operations are influenced by command and control functions. This is due to the expansion of activities within the services. "More important than doing things the best

³ Joint Warfare of the US Armed Forces, Joint Pub 1, *Preface*, US Government Printing Office, WA, DC, 1991, p. iii.

⁴ William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Operation Source: Midget Submarine Attack on the Tirpitz*, Presidio Press, Novato Ca., 1995, p. 205.

⁵ William H. McRaven, *Operation Oak: The Rescue of Benito Mussolini, 12 September 1943*, (Presidio Press, Novato Ca., 1995), p. 205.

⁶ Joint Warfare of the US Armed Forces, Joint Pub 1, *Preface*, US Government Printing Office, WA, DC, 1991, p. iv.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. iii.

way is doing them the same way.”⁸ Fundamentally important issues lie in the areas of unity of command and simplicity. These are common themes from military to civilian organizations and a major emphasis of this work.

C. THE PHENOMENON OF COMMAND AND CONTROL

This idea of command is a term that lacks a great deal of quantitative data; therefore “... how can any worthwhile conclusions be made in support of the theory if there is no empirical data?”⁹ This lack of data then necessitates the understanding of the paradigm of command.

Command is a function that is purely military in nature. In the civilian world command is management. “Management literature is virtually silent on the commander’s requirement to shoulder 24-hour responsibility for “employees” whose livelihood and motivation depend substantially on federal law and bureaucracy.”¹⁰

Many definitions have evolved dealing with this topic. Command is an element of personality and has a nature all its own. Many people feel that command is just leadership. But Leadership is a sub-set of command.

“When you are commanding, leading under conditions where physical exhaustion and privations must be ignored, where the lives of men may be sacrificed, then, the efficiency of your leadership will depend on your tactical ability. It will primarily be determined by your character your reputation, not much for courage - which will be accepted as a matter of course - but by the previous reputation you have established for fairness, for that high-minded patriotic purpose, that quality of unswerving determination to carry through any military task assigned you.”¹¹

⁸ Frank M. Snyder, *Command and Control: Readings and Commentary*, Publication of the Harvard Univ. Program on Information Resources Policy, Cambridge, April 1989, p.39.

⁹ A nomothetic model involves identifying those relatively few considerations that seem to provide at least a partial explanation for causation or why things occur. See Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research; Seventh Edition*, Belmont, CA: 1995.

¹⁰ Roger H. Nye, *The Challenge of Command*, quote George C. Marshall, OCS Speech Fort Benning, Ga, Sept. 1941, Avery Publishing Group, Inc., 1986, p.27-28.

¹¹ Nye, p.34 -35.

Commanders obtain their ideas based upon insights derived from successful commanders of the past. Few current commanders try to dispute the teachings of past heroes. Systems, prior to W.W.II, were separate allowing individuals to make a difference in battles. Napoleon, Lee and Moltke were able to operate independently. The idea of command and control (C2) encompasses the management of both personnel and equipment.

This thesis will treat C2 as follows. C2 refers to two separate actions on the battlefield. First is the command of personnel. Second is the control of systems. Both are integrated as a program that requires management. Commanders, however, are not merely managers. To be an effective commander, one must have the necessary skills to ensure that all combat elements are brought to bear at the decisive point to accomplish the mission. This is extremely important with SOF because of support limitations and the lack of overwhelming force. After the initial infiltration and the commencement of an operation, the element of surprise will be lost. Command is required to sustain the momentum until the end of the operation. Command is needed to direct the staffs that control the battlefield. Staffs exercise the intent of the commander, and their direction guides the battle in the absence of the commander. A staff must be able to operate without the commander's presence to allow the commander time for rest and other requirements.

The integration of weapons through enhanced communication systems has fostered and strengthened a combined arms battlefield. Integration necessitates certain measures to control these new weapons. Machine guns, artillery, tanks and aircraft could not safely operate without just the right amount of control.(ie., coordination) The operators of these systems were not capable of directly observing their results. Continual employment of weapons at decisive points in an engagement are necessary to directly influence the outcome. Thus, the addition of the second variable to command - control.

1. United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)

Why look at the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)? USSOCOM has a broad mission. This mission is to prepare assigned forces to carry out special operations, psychological operations, and civil affairs missions as required and, if directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, plan for and conduct special operations. Within the mission, it is to develop doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures for special operations forces and to conduct specialized courses of instruction for all special operations forces. The training of assigned forces and ensuring the interoperability of equipment and forces, as well as, the consolidation and submitting of the budget proposals. It monitors the promotions, assignments, retention, timing and professional development of all special operations personnel. Recently it was decided to add the responsibility of evaluation to the command. The over-arching mission statement allows special operations forces the ability to be a versatile element of the nation's capabilities.

SOF is cost effective and when coupled with GPF, Special Operations forces offer the National Command Authorities and defense policy makers a low-cost capability for expressing US interest and resolve in every region of the world.¹²

Starkly expressed, SOF is a limited asset in size and scope of mission but a force multiplier in this era of the "Cold Peace".¹³ General purpose force (GPF) units are equipped for the Cold War battle, capable of self-sustaining units, conducting protracted operations covering the entire spectrum of war. SOF units are forces out-front of GPF units, and also stand-alone, mission capable forces.

¹² Carl W. Stiner, "US Special Operations Forces: A Strategic Perspective", *Parameters* Vol. XXII no. 2, Summer 1992, p. 2-13.

¹³ Richard H. Shultz, Jr, Robert L. Pfaltgraff, Jr, W. Bradley Stock, *Special Operations Forces in an Era of Cold Peace*, "Special Operations Forces: Roles and Missions in the Aftermath of the Cold War", DOD Print Plant, Richard H. Shultz, Jr, Robert L. Pfaltgraff, Jr, and W. Bradley Stock, 1995, p. 29.

Prior to the creation of USSOCOM each operation tended to be an ad-hoc command, established for the execution of a specific plan to meet an immediate need. The sheer size of SOF within the military necessitated the creation of a control system, to regularize the ramshackle ad-hoc practice. The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) was their creation. Today, it is comprised of approximately 40,000 personnel. On a daily basis, just less than 20,000 personnel are deployed in support of national objectives.¹⁴

USSOCOM was created after the failed Iranian rescue attempt in 1980. The Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 expressed the need for a Joint Command structure that would maintain a trained force to conduct Special Operations missions. USSOCOM is charged with the training and the inter-operability of its forces and equipment. Since its creation, USSOCOM has conducted several effective operations including Panama, Somalia and Desert Storm.

2. Special Operations Forces (SOF) Missions

SOF missions are developed for six mission categories: direct action (DA), special reconnaissance (SR), counter-terrorism (CT), psychological operations (PSYOP), unconventional warfare (UW) and foreign internal defense (FID), all outside the conventional realm.

FID and UW tend to be integrated operations because of their protracted nature. The US military has been continually conducting FID and limited UW missions in various locations around the world for over fifty years: Indo-china, Africa, Central & South America, and now the newly opened Russian Federation.

All operations vary in profile, Profile being the sum of the parts of a certain mission (e.g... DA, SR, UW, CT, PSYOP and FID) equaling its completion. All of the examples to be analyzed have some such integration. Size of the elements or operation does not define whether

¹⁴ USSOCOM Web page, 28 May 1996, Army Internet Pages <http://soc.mil>

an operation is integrated or not. Duration does play a part in the integration of SOF and GPF, primarily due to logistic constraints within SOF units.

Supportability drives a mission. Unsustainable decisions by a commander seriously limit operations. The essence of flexibility is in the mind of the commander; the substance of flexibility is in logistics.¹⁵

3. General Purpose Forces (GPF)

In GPF missions, one sees units that rely on a narrow mission profile within the constraints of simple guidelines. These given boundaries and parameters rarely deal with sophisticated weapons systems or a complete reliance on night time operations. General missions are conducted with overwhelming force and are usually a joint effort which requires a great deal of extra constraints to avoid fratricide and collateral damage. Conventional missions remain similar internally regardless of the external variables. The only difference is the change in security levels which will be defined in this paper as: threat in a given place and time. The difference between SOF and GPF operations,

... are in the degree of risk, operational technique, mode of employment, independence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.¹⁶

D. DEFINITIONS

Prior to analyzing the effectiveness of USSOCOM, an understanding of the common definitions is needed. Command success is normally judged by mission accomplishment. Instead, this thesis will use unity of command, unity of effort, timing and simplicity as variables.

Special Operations Forces:

are specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces conducting Special Operations to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by generally unconventional means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas.¹⁷

¹⁵ Joint Warfare of the US Armed Forces, Joint Pub 1, 11 November 1991, US Government Printing Office, Wash, DC, ISBN 0-16-035987-2, p. 31.

¹⁶ United States Special Operations Command, *USCINCSOC Operational Concept*, Macdill AFB, FL : USSOCOM/SOJS, 28 July 1989, P. 1-8.

¹⁷ Joint Pub 3.5, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, Draft 28 February 1995, p. 10.

Command:

1. The authority that a commander in the Armed Forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes the responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel.¹⁸

Command and control:

...the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned forces in the accomplishment of the mission.¹⁹

Force multiplier:

is a capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment.²⁰

Relative superiority:

is the condition that exists when an attacking force gains a decisive advantage over a larger well-defended enemy.²¹

Unity of command:

...when the objective required the hierarchical subordination of all component forces under a single commander displaying impartiality towards his or her own service or background in those instances where such a command was specifically authorized by the president.²²

¹⁸ Department of Defense Dictionary, <http://vislab-www.npe.navy.mil/library/jointpub.html>, Joint Electronic Library, DOD Dictionary, 2. An order given by a commander; that is, the will of the commander expressed for the purpose of bringing about a particular action. 3. A unit or units, an organization, or an area under the command of one individual.

¹⁹ Joint Pub. 1, *JCS Pub. 1: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, DC, OJCS, Jun 1986, p. 74. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission.

²⁰ Joint Pub. 3-05.3, *Joint Special Operations Operational Procedures*, 25 August 1993, p. GL-15. As a force multiplier it is equipped for specific short duration missions when operating as a unilateral asset. SOF integrates with GPF because it lacks.... at least strategic mobility and logistical support.

²¹ William McRaven, *Spec Ops*, Presidio Books, Novato Ca, 1995, p. 4.

²² Kenneth C. Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, Vail - Ballou Press, Bingham, NY, 1990, Yale University, p.96. His definition for Unity of Command is when the objective required the hierarchical

Integrated operations:

...are those in which SOF and GPF are employed to accomplish interdependent tasks necessary for the successful completion of the overall mission.²³

Deconfliction:

...the process of allocating resources or personnel through the use of liaisons who are familiar or qualified by their respective command on the given system of which each service is responsible to help in the planning and execution of the mission.²⁴

Self-imposed Complexities (SIC):

Self-imposed complexities(SIC) are from Joint Publication 3.05.3 and stem from the Holloway report on Desert One. It deals with overcompartmentation of information and intelligence, ambiguous chains of C2, and complicated plans. Elaboration on this idea has two distinct values. First, it will give commanders, no matter what their service or background, areas that need extra attention. Second, it shows no partiality towards SOF and GPF units.

E. SCOPE

Strategic operations encompass sub-unit missions at both the operational and tactical levels of war. An analysis of all these operations in their entirety would not be possible within the limited confines of this thesis. Therefore, this study will apply its analysis to short duration, direct action, missions observed at the operational level of war. The relevance of success or failure is incumbent on the level at which an operation is observed. Many operations appear as failures at the strategic level but on the tactical side are successful. The difficulty is the link with strategic goals and/or theater aims or objectives. These weigh heavily on the outcome of public opinion.

subordination of all component forces under a single commander in those instances where such command was specifically authorized by the president. For this work it has been modified to include impartiality.

²³ Michael Kershaw, Master's Thesis titled: *The Integration of Special Operations and General Purpose Forces*, December 1994, p. 5.

²⁴ Joint Pub 3.05.3, *Joint Special Operations Operational Procedures*, 25 August 1993, p. iv-10.

F. METHODOLOGY

This study will observe the effects of SOF within integrated operations but limits its scope by focusing on four strategic operations with differing outcomes. The analysis will use current doctrine to analyze the effectiveness of The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). This thesis also contains interviews with many of the participants of the actual operations. All the operations are short duration, direct action missions in semi-permissive or non-permissive environments at the operational or strategic levels of war or operations other than war (OOTW). Specifically, this thesis will examine Desert One (Eagle Claw), Grenada (Urgent Fury), Panama (Just Cause), and Somalia (Provide Relief, USFORSOM). All of these operations encompass one or more integrated SOF operations that will be examined to determine the effectiveness of SOCOM C2. The main emphasis of the analysis is on four areas of the principles of war: unity of command, unity of effort, simplicity and timing.

The progression in the following chapters of this thesis gives an analysis in Chapter II of the Desert One operation in Iran. Grenada is examined in Chapter III. Panama is analyzed in Chapter IV and Somalia in Chapter V, respectively. These are done using a brief summary of the operation followed by careful examinations of each individual variable with its pertinence to the operation. Chapter VI is the conclusion and an examination of a possible approach for the future.

II. IRAN RESCUE (EAGLE CLAW)

A. DESERT ONE

1. Situation

Special Operations Forces found a rejuvenation in their fortunes on 4 November 1979 when the US embassy was seized in Tehran, Iran. The status of special operations forces had diminished because of problems arising during the Vietnam War. Vietnam saw widespread use of special operations forces in many areas of the country. These special operations forces had developed strong links with the CIA. And subject to operational control this fact had caused organizational problems within the military. These CIA operations were seen as an intervention into military affairs by civilians and politicians. After the war many of the Army's conventional officers were promoted to influential positions throughout the military. Many GPF commanders still garnered hard feelings towards Special Operations. Little utility or future was seen in the special operations community. Drastic cuts in their budgets and personnel began by the military. Special operations had almost been driven into out of existence.

The situation in Iran saw the US lacking in the unique capabilities for such an operation. President Carter was not prepared for what faced him in the way of force diplomacy or military options.¹ The reason was as follows: the military at that time lacked a force trained and prepared to conduct such an operation. This type of operation necessitated a force with the capability to conduct an unconventional missions. Secondly it lacked the equipment to support these type of operations.

In January of 1979, the Shah fled to Egypt and then on to Morocco. A new leftist government assumed control of the country. It was headed by a middle-class revolutionary man

¹ Paul B. Ryan, *The Iranian Rescue Mission: Why it Failed?*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis Maryland, 1985, p.6-7.

named Bakhtiar. He was not in complete control of the country and was unacceptable to the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Ayatollah was in exile in France and was giving indications of returning to Iran.

The Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, whose regime had recently overthrown the Shah of Iran and established his own, had been recording speeches in France condemning the Shah and the US with equal responsibility for the problems within Iran. A great effort had been made to keep the Ayatollah out of the country but upon the Shah's departure the Bakhtair government began to have more problems. Street demonstrations backing the Ayotollah and his bitterly anti-American rhetoric began and he announced that he would start a provisional government. This would end his fifteen year exile. Bakhtair offered his resignation if the Ayotollah remained in Paris.²

When the Embassy was captured by anti-American Islamic revolutionary students, President Jimmy Carter was faced with a complex problem: one was the recovery of US hostages, and the second was the lack of personnel, training and equipment to attempt a such rescue.³

The revolution arose from several causes. The first one was the Westernization and secularization of the society. Women were dressing in fashions that were perceived as being too revealing and a resurrection of the old ways were endorsed by the Shah's opponents. The Westernization had caused a military buildup which widened the gulf between traditional moral values and western practices. This was seen in the military hardware, large American cars and equipment.⁴

² Jimmy Carter, *Keeping the Faith*, Bantam Books, New York, 1982, p. 447.

³ Many of the facts are in the Classified Holloway Report and this narrative is not at variance with its findings.

⁴ Ryan, p. 6.

Another had been the brutality of the Shah's secret police the SAVAK. The SAVAK forces had been using methods based largely on brutality which diminished the credibility of the Shah.⁵ The use of violence by the Shah, caused an alienation of certain factions of different religious parties. The violence was wide spread and caused everyone to ask who was next?

Khomeini was not a new opponent of the Shah's. He had been building his revolutionary Shiite fundamentalist forces for some time while in exile in France. President Carter was dismissive of the public denunciations of the United States by the Ayatollah, not believing that the Shah was in serious danger. The Carter administration seemed not to grasp the implications of strong Islamic puritanical elements in the country.

The seizure of the embassy was in retaliation for the United States having allowed the Shah admittance to the US for a cancer operation. The administration was warned by the US embassy in Iran to expect reprisals for the Shah's admittance. The president refused to recall the embassy personnel in spite of the growing signs of trouble. Rioting, demonstrations and on 14 February 1979 revolutionaries broke into the embassy seizing approximately seventy Americans and demanded the Shah's return for punishment. The administration had been promised that the embassy would be guaranteed protection by the initial revolutionary Bakhtiar government. President Carter's administration had trusted the revolutionary Iranian government to act within the norms of diplomatic relations. President Carter was concerned with the safety of the prisoners and wanted to avoid possible risks to them. On learning of ill-treatment inflicted on the prisoners, he was sickened and alarmed and likened them and their plight to his own family. Carter's reaction had a strongly subjective element. Part of the administration staff believed that the President was too close to the situation to make objective decisions. His unwillingness to use the threat of force combined with a media blitz helped fuel the Khomeini blackmail of America.⁶

⁵ Ryan, p. 6.

⁶ Ryan, p. 10-11.

2. The Rescue Mission - Concept of the Operation

The rescue mission was to originate in Egypt and consist of six C-130 transports which would fly men and equipment to a desert landing strip on the 24th of April 1980. This site would be named "Desert One," located just less than 300 nautical miles from Tehran. At Desert One, the C-130 transports would be met by eight RH-53D helicopters launched from the USS Nimitz in the Arabian Gulf. (See Map 2-1)

At the time of this operation there was a lack of special operations helicopters in sufficient numbers to conduct such a mission. The RH-53 helicopter was chosen because of its combined payload, parts availability and shipboard compatibility. The aircraft was originally designed to conduct mine sweeping operations off US carriers. This fact would help explain their presence as being routine to the Soviets, during their constant surveillance of US carriers.

The helicopters would refuel and the C-130s would leave for allied areas. A minimum of six helicopters were necessary at Desert One to continue the operation. (See Map 2-2) The ground element would be transferred from the C-130 transports to the helicopters for movement to a hidden site a short distance away from Tehran. This part of the operation would be limited to hours of darkness. The entire force would stay in the hide site until the following evening. Then, moving in trucks they would move through multiple fixed checkpoints and roving checkpoints to the city.

Upon reaching the city, they would break into two separate elements. One element of thirteen individuals would move to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, freeing the charge' de affaires and several other Americans separated from the embassy and in captivity there.⁷ The other element numbering around one hundred would then storm the embassy buildings and rescue the

⁷ Stuart O'Neill, telephone interview with Mr. O'Neill, a Special Forces member of the thirteen man element, 2 August 1996, approx. length of interview forty minutes.

remaining hostages.⁸ This embassy ground force was divided into three forces: Red, White and Blue. The Red element comprised of forty men was responsible for the western sector of the compound. The Blue element numbering forty also was responsible for the eastern sector of the embassy compound. The White element numbered thirteen members and was responsible for securing Roosevelt Avenue from Iranian reinforcements as well as covering the withdrawal from the compound. All of the operations were to take less than one hour. Then the Delta teams Red, White and Blue were to begin to move everyone into the soccer stadium a short distance away where the helicopters would begin ferrying personnel to the airfield. To assist the effort, there were to be two AC-130 gunships above the city as circling gun platforms.

While the embassy operation was underway, a company of Rangers from outside the country would seize the airfield to exfiltrate the country at Manzariyeh south of Tehran. It was located about thirty miles south of Tehran.

The elements in the city were to move to the airfield aboard a minimum of six RH-53D helicopters that were still to be operational. The helicopters would then be destroyed by their crews at Manzariyeh. At the airfield the hostages and rescuing force would leave via C-141 transports. As the evacuating aircraft were leaving Iranian air space tactical fighter support would fly close escort duty guarding against Iranian fighters. Then the entire group would fly to freedom in Egypt and then on to the United States.

3. The Operation - Plans and Training

The operation was conceived and developed by the JCS staff in the Pentagon. A planning cell was constructed to work on plans and coordination for the task force. Calls went out for pilots to fly the mission. The commander was chosen and the staff began to take shape, which soon began to split into service sections. Each section was tasked to ensure the performance of

⁸ Charlie A. Beckwith and Donald Knox, *Delta Force*, Harcourt Brace Jovanich, New York, 1983, p.231.

their portion of the mission. The services broke into a ground, and air command as well as a command and control element.⁹

By the 13th of November 1979, the staff was up and running. At this point in the planning process, rudimentary but critical details were being hashed out. First was transportation and the restrictions placed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff, General Jones. He placed overflight restrictions on all areas except the ocean and Saudi Arabia. All other possible launch sites from bordering countries were forbidden due to operational security problems. This severely hampered the choice of airframes because of the limited capacity to carry fuel of most aircraft. It imposed limitations and constraints that complicated the mission. There would be a need for refueling operations at the desert rendezvous for both the helicopters and C-130s. It became apparent that this was going to be an complex mission. As the staff began planning it released a call for pilots to undertake the mission. The call went to a commander of a unit with RH-53 helicopters from the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia. They were to be manned by Navy and Marine aircrews.¹⁰ This request was purportedly for aviators to conduct real mine counter-mine operations. Seven crews were selected and began training. This new mission required the use of night vision goggles. Routine training with goggles was not yet in common practice with units. With the decision made to utilize the RH-53, the next step was to decide how many were needed. The Commander of the Joint Task Force (COMJTF), MG James Vaught was, chosen for the command by General David Jones, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Commander Joint Task Force (COMJTF) Vaught was an Army officer with a proven record in battle with a great deal of combat experience.¹¹ He wanted a ceiling of forty members in the assault element.(See Fig. 2.1) Col Beckwith was the commander of Delta Force, an elite group of special operations forces personnel. Beckwith was adamant about having no less than seventy, so

⁹ James H. Kyle, *The Guts to Try*, Orion Books, New York, 1990, p.15-18.

¹⁰ Kyle, p.59.

¹¹ Ryan, p.17.

so seventy became the new number. Now the number of aircraft could be set. The planners decided that if eight launched from a carrier in the Arabian Sea, that would give six RH-53 helicopters for the mission with two as spares.

But the maintenance record of the RH-53 was not good. This was primarily due to its age. The RH-53 had been in operation since 1973. Historical data showed the aircraft had mediocre reliability, only about sixty percent per mission. The helicopter had problems with the blade inspection method (BIM) which was a light in the instrument panel that indicated a nitrogen loss inside the rotor blade. This would indicate a crack in the blades exterior. However, this was rare as most BIM warnings were false alarms. In analysis after the mission no actual cracks in blades were ever found.

Col Charles Pitman, a Marine, was never actually named the commander of the helicopters, but he went so far as to say that if a commander needed two helicopters then he actually needed three.¹² In addition, there was a decreased lift potential of helicopters from the extreme heat which thins the air. Paul Ryan, a pilot on the mission wrote a book detailing these problems. In the book, Ryan refers to the findings of the Holloway report that a peace time planner by historical data would have chosen twelve helicopters. It is speculated that up to eleven could have been operated from the flight deck of the carrier.

Now that the forces had been chosen, where could they train in secret? Beckwith's Delta Force was training deep in the mountains of North Carolina. The aircrews were moved to Yuma, Arizona to conduct desert training. Rehearsals were to be conducted to ensure an integration of the components. On three occasions the entire team was brought together for a rehearsal. On two of these occasions they were successful in conducting the operation from start to finish. The third time it was curtailed by weather.¹³ During a rehearsal most of the ground crews were relieved

¹² Ryan, p.65.

¹³ Hoivik interview.

from duty for gross safety violations which were deemed dangerous to the pilots and crews.¹⁴ At the last rehearsal it was noted that some elements of the ground crew were new.¹⁵ The fact that portions of the ground crew were new could explain how, later at the Desert One site, certain hand and arm signals could have been confused because of only one practice before the actual operation.

The pilots were having a rough time training with the night vision goggles and were not becoming in their use proficient. Several of the ground force members stated that these were the worst pilots they had ever flown with in their careers.¹⁶ This seems to stem from the lack of a clear statement of the mission's importance in the Department of the Navy. This fact caused the United States Marine Corps to assign their less qualified pilots for the mission.

Two refueling options were attempted. The first was to air drop of fuel bladders into the desert. This proved futile when the bladders chutes did not open and they exploded in the test rehearsal. Another problem was unpredictable nature of wind drift. The bladder's exact landing location was hard to predict. Therefore, if the bladders floated to a location that did not permit access by the C-130 aircraft they were impossible to move. The next option was flying C-130's equipped with fuel pods internally to act as fuel points. This was thought to be more feasible and when rehearsed proved far more manageable.

4. Conduct of the Operation

The operation began as scheduled. Only one small problem was discovered at launch time on the aircraft but it caused an eight minute delay. The C-130's carrying fuel and personnel left Wadi, Egypt at their correct times. After the departure, problems began with the Nimitz

¹⁴ Hoivik, interview.

¹⁵ Hoivik, interview.

¹⁶ Confidential source interview, Member of Task Force, interview conducted in April 1996 at Fort Bragg, NC.

helicopters, first with the BIM and second with the weather.¹⁷ The formation of helicopters first lost aircraft No. 6 to the BIM indicator and No. 8 picked up its crew. No. 8 was now twenty minutes behind the rest of the formation. The flight continued and encountered a haboob.¹⁸ A haboob is a blinding storm of sand created by rain storms in the desert. It is fine dust that diminishes visibility and creates high temperatures.

As the aircraft proceeded they saw the formation of C-130s heading for Desert One at about 2,000 feet. This was the first time the helicopter pilots began to doubt the decision to fly on the deck because of the weather.

While the helicopters were slowly negotiating the route to Desert One the first C-130 landed.(See Map 2-1 and 2-2) After the initial landing the road block team from the Rangers was deployed to cover the main approach to the site. About fifteen minutes into the Desert One site, a bus and a fuel truck happened upon the force members. The fuel truck was blown up by the Rangers and the bus was seized along with its forty passengers. One man escaped the fuel truck to a waiting trail vehicle. The vehicle and its passengers escaped after a hardy pursuit by the Rangers on motorcycles.

Another of the helicopters, No.5, aborted and returned to the Nimitz because of the weather and the collapse of the navigation system on the aircraft. Helicopter No.2 had developed hydraulic problems during the flight and was becoming very difficult to fly.

At Desert One, the C-130s had now been idling for over an hour as the first helicopter landed. Because of the idling aircraft there was an inordinate amount of dust in the air. Soon after, there were four helicopters at the site. Two of the C-130s refueled the helicopters and departed the site for Oman.(See Map 2-2) The mission was now ninety minutes behind on the

¹⁷ The BIM was an indicator that monitored cracks in the rotar blade of the helicopters. The BIM alarms in peace time flying required an immediate grounding of the chopper.

¹⁸ A haboob is a blinding storm of sand created by rain storms in the desert. It is fine dust that diminishes visibility and creates high temperatures.

time table when helos No. 3 & 4 arrived. Refueling was beginning on the choppers as they arrived. It was then discovered that No. 2 was not flyable due to impairment of the hydraulic system.¹⁹ The operation was now down to five helicopters, but the mission required six at this point to continue.

The abort signal was sent and accepted by Washington. On the abort signal things got worse. As the aircraft were being moved around for refueling and the No.2 helo was rigged for destruction, the No. 3 helo collided with the No.4 C-130 tanker. After the explosions, everyone was boarded onto the remaining C-130s and departed, leaving the remaining helicopters.²⁰

B. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF COMMAND

“You cannot take a few people from one unit, throw them in with some from another, give them someone else’s equipment, and hope to come up with a top-notch fighting outfit.”²¹

Unity of command:

...when the objective required the hierarchical subordination of all component forces under a single commander displaying impartiality towards his or her own service or background in those instances where such a command was specifically authorized by the president.²²

With our definition of unity of command, we can now look at this element of the operation. Command was addressed very well in the Holloway report. It stated that the command

¹⁹ Kyle, p. 214-220. It should be noted that many of the flight problems were under peace time constraints and these were not clearly defined by the command prior to the execution of the mission.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 221-230. This is not all that was left onboard. The air crew to one of the helicopters left the air rescue plan and code names at the site. This was later a topic of the Congressional Hearings as well as a sore point with Dick Meadows who was one of the men inserted into Tehran.

²¹ Kyle, p. 319.

²² Kenneth C. Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, Vail - Ballou Press, Bingham, NY, 1990, Yale University, p. 96. His definition for Unity of Command is when the objective required the hierarchical subordination of all component forces under a single commander in those instances where such command was specifically authorized by the president. For this work it has been modified to include impartiality.

structure was good at the higher echelons but confusing at the middle to lower levels. This is the area of impartiality in the mission. Each commander tends to become confined with their own service's portion of the mission. Army Commander Joint Task Force (COMJTF) Vaught was constantly interacting with the Delta force commander Col Beckwith. Both were Army officers. "As was usual with these meetings, the generals went behind closed doors with Charlie for about an hour before we all sat down together. They would be going over the embassy assault, and we didn't need to know those details."²³ This type of compartmentalization was very dangerous, leaving little or no flexibility to the operation. The rigid design leaves no ability for other individuals to adapt to changing situations in each of its phases.

This danger is exemplified by the actions of one of the helicopter crews. The actual air plans for the seizure of the embassy were in their aircraft before and during the operation.²⁴ The reason given at investigative hearings was that there was no safe place to store this classified material onboard the USS Nimitz'. This is an unacceptable decision for a senior officer. With this action other personnel were put at risk. The teams inserted into Tehran to procure the trucks for the second nights operation were at serious risk at this time.²⁵ If all had known the importance of the operational security of the mission the lives of others would have been better protected. A more unified and cohesive team would have evolved to compensate for the shortfalls of the planners.

Major General (MG) Phillip Gast was an Air Force officer assigned as a special consultant to the operation. He spent a great deal of time trying to help take some of the burden off of Vaught. He was also very active with Col Pitman and the training of the helo pilots. This was an informal arrangement but a confusing one due to his out-ranking Gen. Vaught. Gen. Gast was promoted during this period which added to the confusion.²⁶ This confusion was because on

²³ Kyle, p. 87.

²⁴ Kyle, p. 320. In addition to this it seriously threatened the lives of the operatives working in Tehran, as it was now possible to look for suspicious individuals within the area.

²⁵ Kyle, p. 299-301.

²⁶ Kyle, p. 56. Also see Beckwith p. 204, and Ryan p. 24.

the surface the two officers appeared to be the same rank. This is not clear to the subordinates because the actual seniority is by the date of the individuals rank. His interference with the helicopters was not always beneficial, as his experience was with fixed wing aircraft not rotary wing.²⁷

Prior operations as with this one were ad-hoc teams. These were very difficult to manage due to the organizational problems with service languages and differing views of command. A common Joint Task Force (JTF) structure was available for this operation but not utilized due to operational security reasons. The idea of an ad-hoc team is fine. But this team must not appear in a state of constant flux. It must solidify itself.

The command force structure for the operation was complicated. In the beginning of the operation around the 6th of November 1979 the staff consisted of approximately fifteen personnel. By the 12th of November it had grown to about thirty and within the following month it is hard to count the actual number of participants in the staff. The best estimate that this author can reach is that the Pentagon planning cell numbered close to or in excess of sixty five staff planners.

1. Command Structure - The Chain of Command

A complete breakdown of the staff is not necessary. But the key figures will be placed in their respective elements. Only Col. Beckwith was named as the ground element commander of the rescue. The force structure was a typical military hierarchy.(See Fig. 2.1)

Gen. Vaught was hand picked for this mission by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David Jones. His relations with Col. Beckwith's unit early on show a great deal of interest in their portion of the operation.

²⁷ These types of aircraft require different methods of training. Interviewed with helicopter and fixed wing pilots to determine if this a definite problem.

Gen. Vaught did not clearly define his views to his commanders thus creating the problem of ambiguity in his chain of command. He tried to establish a Pentagon planning cell and a training cell on location in Yuma. This is a common occurrence in missions like this. But it must be organized as such. All personnel must know the commander. The so-called pecking order must be known in multi-service operations. Gen. Vaught was the COMJTF, but who spoke for him? He lacked a designated deputy commander (DCO). The DCO of an operation is responsible by regulation with the same authority as the commander in his or her absence. Generally, the executive officer is in control of the commander's staff. Gen. Vaught may have wanted to designate a training command in Yuma that either he or his DCO would run. This situation would have alleviated the ambiguity of the situation and his decision must be conveyed to the rest of the members.

Another confusing factor is the high number of general officers. In the Pentagon, there were constant visits from high ranking officers. During each day high-ranking general officers seemed to be calling the shots.²⁸ MG Gast was to help with current details of the area as he had just returned from being a captive from the first seizure of the embassy several months earlier. Gast's promotion along with his wearing of an air force uniform gave him a great deal of credibility. He showed interest in the air operation and was taken at face value as resident expert on air operations. He frequently visited the Yuma site and influenced the training of the pilots. Many of the officers wore similar ranks but maintained a different status. This hierarchy was known only among themselves not the subordinates. The power of the uniform on the human psyche must not be under-estimated. A great deal of credit is granted to an individual for the uniform they wear. The intimidation felt by the perceived idea of knowledge or being wrong is very powerful. This has a kinship effect and a security level born of their perceived expertise.

²⁸ Kyle, p.15-26.

confusion arose with what service the helicopter commander would be. This difficult mission had been refused previously by the Army and Air Force. The Navy finally re-accepted it. However, the damage was in the increased ambiguity of command.

C. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF EFFORT

In the case of the Iranian rescue there was no better mission to rally public military support. Saving the lives of innocent Americans held against their will is not hard to sell. This mission began under very strong national goals for America. But mistakes began immediately within the armed forces. The entire mission was hurt because of the decision to compartmentalize. In the Navy, a call was sent out for real world mine sweeping operations. The older more experienced Navy pilots had flown thousands of these missions, so they were passed on to younger less experienced pilots. A mission with the national strategic objective of Desert One deserves the best America can offer. This type of call should have been sent out to the commands and offered to the best, most dedicated pilots.²⁹

In all operations, there is a need for a cross fertilization of information by less involved individuals. This is a strict command function. Here the commander's intent is crucial along with staff unity. The staff is aware of the requirements of certain portions of the operation.(e.g.,... weather conditions on human needs.) An intelligence staff is loaded with a large number of very intelligent people. However, these individuals should limit their perceptions of what they feel the needs to be and make the data available for all. Many times as in the case of Desert One, the intelligence people tried to give the operator what they felt would help the operation. But information is not intelligence until a qualified individual interprets it. If someone is not trained first hand on the requirements of SOF they will miss or interpret items incorrectly.

²⁹ Hoivik interview.

D. ANALYSIS OF SIMPLICITY

The overall plan was very complicated. On the first day of the operation alone aircraft were embarking on the mission from Egypt and a carrier in the Gulf. Mission success rested on the linkup of these aircraft. The shortest route was six hundred miles and the longest being between 5,000-6,000 nautical miles round trip. The whole operation was constrained to hours of darkness. Darkness in this region was less than eleven hours at that time of year. The flight times were very rigid with the linkup scheduled for 2400 hrs, four and a half hours into the operation. All operators had approximately five hours until daylight. At 0125 hours the last helicopters landed, roughly one hour and thirty minutes behind schedule. Adding fuel time, the aircraft would leave over two hours behind their planned times.

The rendezvous point and its operation was extremely complex. The aircraft were to conduct refueling operations at the site and in complete darkness. A total of eight helicopters and six C-130s were planned for the site at once. Ground crews found it extremely difficult to conduct the refueling during rehearsals. There was no communication permitted and limited lights. On two occasions during rehearsals the refueling operation had been attempted and failed. Only two weeks prior to the operation, the ground crews had been replaced for failing during the previous rehearsal.³⁰

Compartmentalization made the plan inflexible. The compartmentation allowed limited information exchange. Information exchange enhances the simplicity of the plan with regards to intelligence. Good intelligence simplifies a plan by reducing the unknown factors and the number of variables that must be considered.³¹ Had the Iranian radar capabilities been known better, the helicopters would have gained enough altitude to clear the haboob the same as the C-130s.

³⁰ Hoivik interview.

³¹ William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops*, "Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice", Presidio Press, Novato CA, 1995, p.12.

Iranian radio detection capabilities were not thoroughly known. So, radio transmissions were needlessly restricted between aircraft. Adding to the confusion the actual commander of the operation at the site was never really known. It was a thought to be Beckwith, but he was not equipped for the decisions involved and a great deal of movement ensued to make decisions about the aircraft. It was stated that there was confusion with the pilots at the site because the commanders did not wear rank. If the operation had not been over compartmentalized all the personnel would have known one another.

E. ANALYSIS OF TIMING

Timing in this case has been overlooked. Special Operations are short-duration missions. Desert One was not well planned with regards to timing. The idea of hiding six to eight helicopters for a period of twelve or more hours is far fetched. The RH-53 helicopter is one hundred feet in circumference by twenty eight feet in height. It was unable to start itself and needed to be mechanically started.

Was the unexpected arrival of two vehicles on the road bad luck or something that should have been expected? Traffic in the area should have been checked to gain an idea of the usual civilian movement in the area. Many Americans see the desert as a barren and lifeless place. Nomads live there and slight changes would be noticed immediately, similar to having the trash cans overturned in your backyard. Hiding the tracks at Desert One would have been very hard and might have revealed that a rescue attempt was imminent.

The control of hostages would be difficult. If more hostages were captured after the aircraft departed they may interfere with the plan. The additional noise and movement of unwilling captives would draw more attention to the rescuers.

Undetected movement in Iran was extremely difficult because of roving and fixed check points, yet success depended on complete surprise with split second timing. The country was

undergoing an internal revolution and ardent security measures were being instituted throughout the entire country.

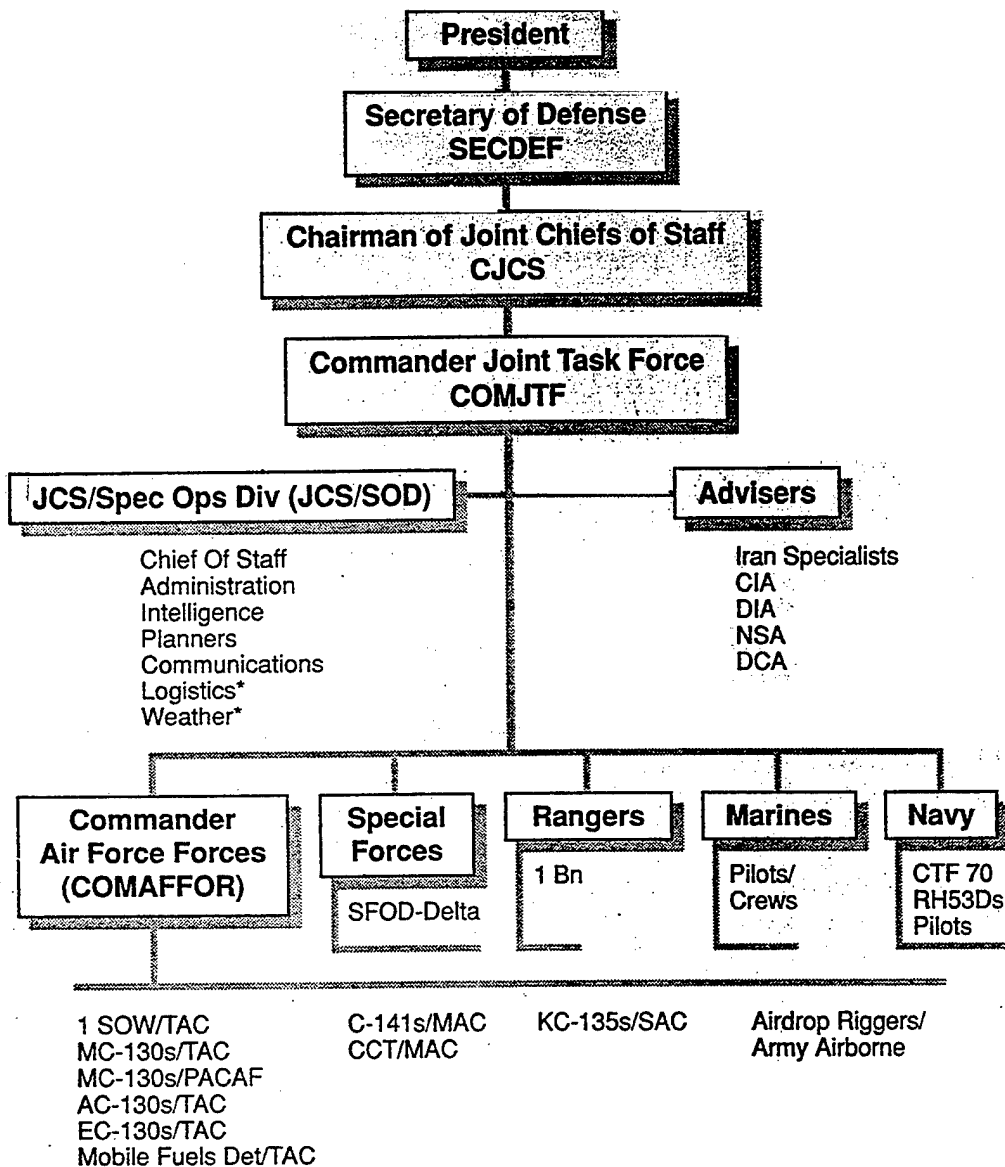
The pace of the operation would have been hard to control. Just on the insertion alone they encountered a bus load of non-combatants and several trucks of alleged smugglers. The size of the operation seemed to grow at every move. The more moving parts the more difficult surprise would be to gain.

F. CONCLUSION

As with most SOF missions the risk involved was high, as were the distances and need for autonomy. Many of the problems on this mission were avoidable. If the crews had been briefed on proper procedures for aborting and changing flight procedures, the first part of the operation could very well have succeeded. If more rehearsals had been conducted with all the actual participants, problems with the ground operations could have been detected.

It is perhaps just as well that the ground portion of the operation never occurred. It had some very serious flaws, that by today's standards would have denied its consideration as it was planned. A two day mission with a transportation plan requiring trucks to negotiate random road blocks contains some degree of wishful thinking.

Some simple rules following unity of command, unity of effort, timing and simplicity could very well have enhanced this plan's probability of success. Commanders must avoid imposing complexities upon themselves. The idea of managing everything is impossible. But by following simple management principles related to the variables risk reduced. Subordinates then have the management tools to make similar decisions as the commander.



* Added 30 days later

FIGURE 2.1 Organizational Chart - Desert One, James Kyle, *Guts to Try*.

III. GRENADA (URGENT FURY)

A. SUMMARY

1. Situation - Political and Military

The Grenada operation analysis begins with the question of its necessity. Was the invasion needed at all? US attention was drawn away from the tiny island of Grenada because of the earlier Iranian situation. The legitimacy of US intervention was based on the safety of American citizens on the island. It was a perceived danger that was still present from the Iranian hostage situation of the previous administration. Recent Marxist incursions worldwide from Angola to El Salvador greatly increased the administration's willingness to utilize force. The bombing in Lebanon added to the diminishing US credibility worldwide. Stopping the spread of communism, as well as, the need to revitalize the US national position were important factors bearing on the Grenada problem.

In March of 1979, Maurice Bishop, the leader of a Marxist coup seized power on Grenada. His movement was called the new JEWEL and was deeply rooted with close ties to Cuba and the USSR.¹

The Reagan Administration had continued and intensified the Carter "destabilization and denial" policy of economic isolation directed against Grenada, Nicaragua, and Cuba.² US pressure in the International Monetary Fund coupled with the European Community left Bishop's regime economically on the verge of collapse.

¹ Richard D. Hooker, "Presidential Decision making and Use of Force: Case Study Grenada", *Parameters*, Summer 1991, p. 63, JEWEL: Joint Enterprise for Welfare, Education and Liberation Party.

² Hooker, p. 63.

In September of 1983, radicals within the movement banded with the army commander Hudson Austin and Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard. They wanted to share power with Bishop. Bishop was placed in house arrest with his close supporters. On 19 October, the US Embassy in Barbados received word that Bishop and supporters had been executed by the Revolutionary Military Council. Commander Austin and Coard were in control of the island. Vice-president Bush directed that full-scale contingency planning proceed for a military takeover of the island, and he secured presidential approval for the diversion to Grenada of a US Marine Task Force bound for Lebanon.³

Support for the action was procured through the Prime Minister of Barbados J.M.G.M. Adams. Adams had united many of the leaders of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States towards US intervention.

Anarchy was reported by a CIA operative on the island prior to the US intervention named Urgent Fury. The President gave the final "go" on the 23rd of October 1983 for execution two days later on 25 October. At this point, operational control of military operations effectively passed to the Joint Chiefs.⁴

2. Mission - Concept of the Operation

The concept of the mission was designed to be a "coup de main" in a single sudden strike. The mission was to seize the island in a combat operation and begin peacekeeping operations. It was to be spearheaded by the Marine Corps contingent that had been headed for Lebanon.

³ Hooker, p. 63.

⁴ Hooker, p. 66.

The Marine contingent was first tasked to conduct a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) operation. The mission was then expanded beyond the capabilities of a Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU). The Marines, in addition to the NEO, would seize the island by force and conduct operations to return the previous government to power. The concept was simple. However, it proved beyond the capabilities of the Marine task force alone, partly because of growing enemy strength estimates. Therefore, the mission was expanded by ADM Wesley McDonald the Commander-in-Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT) to include army and air force personnel. The commander of the SOF units was MG Shultie. His chain of command was to the task force commander VADM Joseph Metcalf.⁵

The mission would now be divided into a joint service operation. The island would be isolated by a small naval force. The main effort would be two attacks on the Grenadine strong points by Marine and Army units. Marine units would conduct an amphibious assault on the eastern shore and proceed north. US Army Rangers would seize the airfield at Point Salinas by an airborne assault, then proceed north and prepare for elements of the 82nd Airborne Division to reinforce the effort. The 82nd Airborne Division would either parachute into Salinas airfield or airland.⁶

The Grenadine military's internal lines would be cut and then each US force would sweep north mopping up whatever resistance that presented itself. (See MAP 3-1) Once control of the island was gained, officials freed and placed back in power, the operation would end. As the operation was being conducted on the island, command and control would remain afloat. The logistics would arrive for the army aboard air transports from the mainland. After the completion of the operation, the Marine Task Force would continue on to replace the force already in

⁵ Joseph Metcalf III, "Decision Making and the Grenada Rescue Operation", *Ambiguity and Command*. James G. March and Roger Weissinger-Baylon, Pitman Publishing 1986, p. 269.

⁶ Petre, p. 249-252.

Lebanon. The US Army would continue with peace-keeping operations on the island. The combat portion of the operation was scheduled for one to five days.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) were added to seize four objectives, to disrupt command and control, to protect civilians and government officials, and to evaluate landing sites for the assaults. The Reagan administration's prime reason for the invasion was to protect American students. This and the rescue of the British Prime Minister, Sir Paul Scoon became two priorities for the invasion force.

3. The Operation- Plans and Training by the JCS

Planning began four days before the actual operation from a warning order given to ADM McDonald. This was done for operational security (OPSEC) reasons, using the same OPSEC paradigm as Desert One. Compartmentalization at the JCS was so tight that the logistics officer for the overall J-4 was unaware of the operation until twenty four hours prior to D-Day.⁷ This may not seem such a large scale problem until one thinks in terms of logistics for a joint venture, the ramifications grow disproportionately.

Admiral Wesley McDonald, Commander in Chief of Atlantic Command, was issued a warning order on the 18th of October 1983. The planning cell developed a command headed by Vice Admiral Metcalf, then the Navy's Commander Second fleet. As the overall mission was expanded to include seizing the island and peacekeeping operations, the first planning meeting was conducted on 22 October 1983 at Atlantic Command headquarters in Norfolk Virginia. Not all service sections were present at this meeting.⁸

⁷ Gilbert S. Harper, "Logistics in Grenada: Supporting No- Plan Wars", *Parameters*, June, 1990, p. 53.

⁸ Harper, p. 53.

Urgent Fury was given final Presidential approval on the 23rd for an execution on the 25th of October 1983. Monday, the 24th of October the final planning meeting was held and still the records show missing elements of the organizational structure of the staff. No Army element was originally present. Summoned to the Pentagon on the 24th of October, General Norman Schwarzkopf was chosen to augment the staff. Major General Schwarzkopf was then commander of the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart. The new task force was TF-120.

4. Conduct of the Operation

The operation was delayed several hours from its planned time schedule. First there were delays by Army units departing Fort Bragg North Carolina. En route, the Rangers were instructed to de-rig their parachutes to conduct a change of mission and airland. To airland, the aircraft would land and expel all cargo as quickly as possible and depart for safety. This is only possible when the runway is clear of obstacles and permits accessibility for aircraft. This was changed back to a parachute operation about twenty five minutes out from the Point Salinas drop point. Many of the Rangers were instructed to put on equipment without safety checks and lacking equipment. The parachute drop was delayed so that the overall operation became a daylight assault. ⁹ (See Map 3-1)

The Marine units were encountering similar set backs on the launch ships. Other problems not fully explained, illustrate different time schedules between the transport and attack aircraft. On the amphibious vehicles one observes many delays to the operation. The Marines had been on board their amphibious vehicles for many hours and still were unable to launch due to changing reports of the condition of the shoreline. Initially boarding the landing craft for a 0430hrs launch, they stayed in the vehicles until 1750hrs when they reembarked the amphibious

⁹ SFC Allen, Member of the assault element, USSOCOM Video, 1991-1992.

ships to rest. A short time after they were ordered to reboard their landing craft and launch the assault. The Marine commander's concerns about the ability of the craft to negotiate the rough shoreline necessitated the dispatch of a team of Navy SEALs to test the beach gradients. The first report from the SEALs was not sufficient to commit troops, so, a second test of the beach was attempted. The Marines sent a lone vehicle with the commander of one of the units to inspect the beach. This is a very risky decision on any operation to send the ground element commander alone to investigate the situation.¹⁰

Meanwhile, after landing on the island, the Rangers were encountering heavy small arms fire from the surrounding area. Quickly overcoming these obstacles they moved towards the campus at True Blue to assist the students. After capturing this area and they found that only a handful of the students were there. The rest of the students were in another area of the island called Grand Anse. Telephone contact with the students at Grand Anse was made and maintained throughout the operation.

The Rangers encounter fairly stiff resistance in the scrub area to the north of Point Salinas. The progress became very slow and the first day's progress slowly dwindled. The Marines encountered further troubles as they lost two Cobra gunships. One Marine was killed and others were seriously wounded.

Most problems that were encountered were command related. There were mix ups between Marine and Army units as was cooperation among many of the participants. Additional

¹⁰ Ronald H. Spector, "US Marines in Grenada 1983", History and Museums Division Headquarters, US Marine Corps Washington DC 1987, p. 13.

problems came from the higher headquarters wanting to know why all the objectives had not been achieved and what the body count had been.¹¹

After a combined decision by both VADM Metcalf and MG Schwarzkopf to bomb the enemy command center at Fort Frederick, the operation began to move at a much accelerated pace. Due to the rules of engagement the decision to bomb Fort Frederick was heavily weighed by VADM Metcalf. The reason this was such a problem were the rules of engagement were very restrictive with regards to collateral damage.

Late the first day the 82nd Airborne Division arrived and began to relieve the Rangers, thus adding to the combat force on the island. The Rangers were now free to conduct other operations for the commander. The SEALs were not having the same mission success as the Rangers and Marines. The SO forces that went to the Governor's quarters to rescue Sir Paul Scoon were pinned down by armored personnel carriers (APCs). Similar difficulties were suffered at the radio station. Pinned down by two APCs, and low on ammunition the SOF were barely able to make an escape out of the back of the compound. This action left two team members wounded but moveable. They then escaped into the ocean and after signaling for help were rescued by another SEAL team.¹²

On day two, the island was under US control except the Point Salinas and Grand Anse areas and several small areas to the north. The area of Grand Anse was of highest priority, as the students were the reason US combat forces were in action. Higher headquarters was exerting pressure on the task force to rescue the students. The problem was how to get to the students?

¹¹ General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Peter Petre, *The Autobiography, It Doesn't Take a Hero*, Bantam Book, New York, 1992, p. 244-260.

¹² Luke Cass, Senior Chief of US SEAL team, USSOCOM Video, 1991-1992.

The students were located near the shore but enemy elements were between them and their rescuers.

Late on the morning of day two, a plan was developed to rescue the students by a air assault with Marine helicopters and Army Rangers. They would fly in from the ocean to rescue the students.

There was some heavy resistance to the operation, but, it was accomplished with no loss of life on the US side and the loss of only one Marine helicopter.

Higher command was for some reason extremely interested in Calvigny barracks. The order was to have control of the barracks no later than the nightfall the third day.

The plan was another air assault by the Rangers. Late on the afternoon of day three, the Rangers were once again loaded on board helicopters. This time the aircraft came from the 82nd Airborne Division. They flew to the barracks where disaster struck. Two of the helicopters over shot the landing zone and collided, killing almost a dozen soldiers. Then, after the accident, it was discovered that the area contained no enemy personnel.

This was the last major action of the operation. No more open skirmishes were encountered. On Day six the 2nd of November, VADM Metcalf declared the hostilities finished.

B. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF COMMAND

The reason for this command arrangement was caused under the perfect heading: "freeing American hostages". The military preaches, "we fight as we train", and here lay the fallacy. A few months before Grenada, an effective joint operation had been practiced. If the

operation had gone as exercised earlier in May of 1983, then the Caribbean Command in Key West, Florida would have commanded the operation.

The approved course of action exercised in the Joint Exercise Solid Shield 83 then in existence would have been possible. It did not appear similar to any other plan in existence.¹³ The command had also undergone testing in the Exercise Universal Trek on the island of Vieques.¹⁴ It had proved both successful and viable. By not using any part of the prior plans or participants, all involved had to begin from scratch recreating, understanding and building a solid working relationship.

The command structure was admirable: clean and simple. (See Fig. 3.1) The chain of command always produces differences of opinion which can develop into problems if left unchecked. The problem anticipated by VADM Metcalf was a rivalry between the army officers. These officers were of equal rank at the time of this operation. He tried to alleviate this by calling all his army commanders together and explaining his command.¹⁵ The anticipated intra-service rivalry was not the case at all. His problem was inter-service rivalry. The staff onboard the USS Guam, displayed several clear problems between officers of different services. A rule of thumb between military officers is no matter what the service component of the officer the rank of the individual is respected unless a criminal act is committed. As Urgent Fury unfolds, the momentum of the operation seems to effect the judgment and respect given to senior grade officers by other senior officers.

¹³ Gilbert S. Harper, "Logistics in Grenada: Supporting No- Plan Wars", *Parameters*, June, 1990, p. 52.

¹⁴ Harper, p. 52.

¹⁵ Joseph Metcalf III, *Decision Making and the Grenada Rescue Operation, Ambiguity and Command*, James G. March and Roger Weissinger-Baylon, Pitman Publishing 1986, footnotes, p. 296, p. 281 and 283.

For example, the Marine commander refused to fly Rangers in Marine helicopters. The reason for the integration of the units was to facilitate the commanders intent: to rescue the students. It was not an unlawful order nor was the decision more dangerous in any way. This was further aggravated by his further hesitation to accept a direct order from a major general in the US Army.¹⁶ This problem was fixed by VADM Metcalf immediately after he learned of it from by MG Schwarzkopf.

Worse than usual, there were mix ups of authority. These concerned power and responsibility for decisions-making. The Grenada mission gave several of these examples in the realm of logistics. The task force was in the operational chain of command but resupply came from the services, and the Secretary of Defense was the first common superior. The ad-hoc command had no tested way to ensure Army units could receive resupplies. As units were relieving other units in swapout type missions problems developed. A relief in place is a normal infantry maneuver. Upon the addition of the Marine Corps an integrated supply network was lacking. The outgoing unit on Grenada would leave a great deal of expendable supplies. These would be used by the incoming unit. But the Marines refused to relinquish their supplies to the army units. This was never cleared up, even after receiving word from ADM. McDonald's staff. These commanders should have known what they could have been compensated for in the exchange of supplies.¹⁷ Had they really understood unity of command and unity of effort, these problems would never have arisen. Impartiality of mission and misplaced service loyalty are well illustrated in this case. The Marine Corps officers were narrowly concerned with their own mission success at the expense of the entire operation.

¹⁶ General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Peter Petre, *The Autobiography It Doesn't Take a Hero*, Bantam Book, New York, 1992, p. 254.

¹⁷ Harper, p. 54.

Compartmentalization was a severe problem in only one area. This was intelligence. It was due not to a lack of intelligence but to transfers of information between different intelligence units. The intelligence sources were ill equipped to support this type of mission and lacked the time to gather answers to specific questions of the combat units. Lacking time, some glitches were inevitable but excessive, for instance, regarding maps and weather.

The compartmentalization of the planning of this operation with regards to the students caused problems. The type of intelligence necessary for a rescue operation is and was very secretive by its very nature. This caused a breakdown of command. Not that the knowledge was not available but that the secrecy caused a void of interoperability between all services. The assets were available to give both of these deficiencies to the units. During the operation none of the units reviewed had the same maps. Not until after the operation ended were coordinated maps available from the Defense Mapping agency. These were needed to conduct planning as well as actual missions. Had this defect been a greater concern of the overall commander, a naval officer, it would have been treated as a larger problem from the start. Ships within the Atlantic Command routinely carry sets of navigational charts for the Caribbean, but no ground maps.¹⁸ The ability to ask the right agencies for support is where the problem lies. Had more emphasis been placed on the procurement of maps by intelligence personnel on the flagship, USS Guam, possible, lives could have been spared. Again we see lack of impartiality of the service. The overall command responsibility was in the hands of a naval officer who did not see the importance of having the same maps for everyone. Had an army officer been in charge, or had Schwarzkopf arrived sooner the importance of maps over navigational charts may have been seen in time.

¹⁸ VADM Metcalf's COMSECONDFLT staff is nearly all navy and is only used to conduct operations at sea confirmed by CAPT Wayne Huges, US Navy.

In the area of weather, the Rangers departing the mainland were told the weather was clear. Yet, the SEAL teams that had been infiltrated to observe the airfield had been lost at sea because of rough weather.¹⁹ The Marine assault had been delayed because of weather conditions.²⁰ This is extremely important information to a force that must fly to conduct an airborne insertion. The paratroopers were unable to change any of their equipment once rigged in the parachutes. Weather information was given on the mainland by briefers that obviously had not contacted the naval ships in the waters off the islands. This lack of information transfer was because of compartmentalization. If unity of command existed the transfers of information would have been more complete. In a joint arena, staff members may have a better idea of the correct questions to ask and answers to find.

Avoiding too many layers of command was very well done by VADM Metcalf. His utilization of the radio and reporting kept the higher command appraised of the situation. Only one problem that had serious implications came up. This was the body count issue. In Vietnam the commanders had to evaluate their effectiveness through the use of the number of enemy bodies found dead. Body count has never been formally specified as a quantifiable way of judging success. The NCA and USCINCLANT were evidently trying to evaluate the accomplishments of the task force through a non-doctrinal method. VADM Metcalf curtailed this after initial reports had been sent. MG Schwarzkopf attempted to stop this evaluation method but was still required to send the initial reports. His wise decision was to send the reports in aggregate numbers instead of by service avoided senseless competition. The mission was not being evaluated on its true accomplishments.

¹⁹ Petre, p. 248.

²⁰ Spector, p. 7-8.

1. Command Structure - The Chain of Command

For simplicity's sake, this thesis will develop the chain of command from Admiral Wesley McDonald the Commander in Chief of Atlantic Command. (See Fig 3.2) Admiral McDonald was a naval aviator who had very little experience with anything but operations at sea. VADM Metcalf, however, had been on many joint operations in the Vietnam War and was a participant in the evacuation of Saigon during its last days.²¹ He felt that there was a few important things for an operation of this type. First was the use of constant situation reports (SITREPS) to the higher headquarters to keep them abreast of daily progress. Second was the goal of having the following day's operation plan ready for USCINCPAC and his staff, so they could review it. Third, though not so much an operational solution, was the keeping of records. These later explained and justified the actions and decisions made in the subsequent reviews of the operation.

A key trait of VADM Metcalf seems to be his interest in two factors. One is his belief in cooperation between services. The second was his ability to take advice from his subordinates.

Major General Schwarzkopf was a wise choice for the operation. Not only was he familiar with naval operations, he was familiar with all aspects of ground warfare. MG Schwarzkopf had served on a joint staff in Hawaii. He was versed in staff and command language as well as in special operations forces and had learned from experience gained in Vietnam. MG Schwarzkopf's career mainly centered on conventional operations. His joint operations understanding of the SOF objectives may have been limited because of his late addition to the project. His overwhelming assets seem to have been his strong will and ability to

²¹ Metcalf, p. 278.

greatly enhance effort of all parts of the operation by winning the confidence of Metcalf as principle advisor.

The Air Force officer was Col Fister. His choice for this operation was another wise decision. Col Fister had extensive flying experience in countless missions. He held knowledge gained from his experiences in Vietnam. Col Fister was tasked to initially plan the air flow to the island for the seizure of the two main points: Point Salinas and Pearls airfields. His thorough planning allowed not only the seizure but aided the follow on troops from the 82nd.

The US Army commanders consisted of MG Ed Trobaugh, commander of the 82nd Airborne Div., and MG Dick Shultie, the Special Operations commander. Both had backgrounds in ground operations in Vietnam and their expertise was well utilized during the operation. MG Trobaugh had the assets to correct two aspects that appeared to be neglected during the planning phase of the operation that facilitated ground combat, namely, logistics and artillery. MG Trobaugh had a complete logistics element attached to his division. This was similar to standard planning by the Marines but was less effective because of the long supply line from the mainland. The Marines had superior logistics aboard ships in the immediate area, but as we have observed were not willing to integrate these logistics with the army. The Marine commander of the MAU, Col Faulkner was an experienced ground operations officer and his entire unit was trained and equipped for ground combat.

C. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF EFFORT

This mission clearly supported the US position and ensured the priority of missions. It did seem to lack popular support of the US population. All units present at this operation were part of a team in support of national goals. The services were not under any misgivings about the

conduct of their missions nor were they skeptical of the reasons for their utilization. It was similar to the Iranian rescue attempt because of the American hostages.

Unity of effort was short lived during the actual conduct of the mission. The Marines refusal to move army personnel and to give them logistic support. The problems need not be explained again, but reemphasis of the problem is helpful when trying to understand the continuing threat of inter-service rivalry. Everyone wants to participate but this may not be possible nor is it efficient. Impartiality is a must in all integrated operations.

The information hand-off during and prior to Grenada was not impartial. That weather reports were not obtainable is unsatisfactory in any operation. The US intelligence effort could have provided the correct information to all the participants. Intelligence gathering must be conveyed to the right personnel. Short notice operations will cause suffering on both the enemy and friendly sides when embroiled in such a battle. More effort is needed to develop personnel who are trained for joint operations.

The Special Operations missions for Grenada were important, unique, and worth the effort. But they were not treated with the same care as the rest of the missions. All of the SOF targets were compromised and SOF operations were in some way hindered. During the missions the SOF personnel were outnumbered by the enemy. Using unity of effort in an impartial manner, it was possible to plan for better gunship support in advance. This may not have been overlooked completely, but the evidence is that it was lacking. Only after help arrived was escape an option for the special operations personnel.

Another concern was the fact that higher headquarters attempted to command the ground situation. This was demonstrated by the Calvigny Barracks raid. Once upon the objective they

found no enemy. It was an unnecessary objective and was seen as such by the ground forces on the scene. The attack was forced on the units and cost the lives of several soldiers.

D. ANALYSIS OF SIMPLICITY

Grenada was not overly complicated. This operation had the luxury of air and naval superiority. The plan was simple, Marines in the north and army in the south. Eliminate all resistance inside each of your areas and rescue the Americans. The overall reason for the operation was the students trapped there, so why was this planning an afterthought? There was a plan but the students were in different location. Their intelligence failed them and their plan lacked flexibility and responsiveness to react to the new location. The backup plan was for infantry units, such as the Rangers, to save the hostages. This is not the norm in hostage rescue situations involving these participants but in this case it was the solution. The simplicity of the basic design of the operation helped the operations success. Once the hostages were missed on the first attempt, the forces seizing the island had eliminated the resistance and reduced its threat to such an extent that time and effort could be used to find and rescue the students.

E. ANALYSIS OF TIMING

The operations on the island as a whole were sized to gain a win with overwhelming force. The SOF missions were not so well conceived. They all lacked some of the key ingredients to a special operations mission. Had they been better integrated in the overall plan with regards to their priority there may have been a greater success. Timing as it relates to this operation lies in the area of surprise and its duration of utilization. After each of the SO missions was compromised they were subsequently surrounded. Each had to wait for assistance to escape.

The loss of a SEAL team the night prior to the assault leaves a sense that there was too much "wishful thinking". This should have been an early indicator to give greater priority to the high risk missions. Had the emphasis been on the high risk missions, better planning would have given them early execution and better success. This was not done. The daylight insertion of the Army Rangers was a mistake. They are trained to fight at night and their tactics are designed for limited visibility. This adds some weight to the argument of impartiality of command. Taking a closer look at the chain of command one is able to see that a majority of the knowledge was on the conventional side of the military. This may also explain how the emphasis for mission planning was prioritized and how the high value targets, such as the hostages, seem to have been neglected.

F. CONCLUSIONS

In each of the areas, a clear chain of command is a must have item for an effective operation. Having unity of command, unity of effort, simplicity and timing on the side of the US is of utmost importance. Few operations are successful without them. In Grenada, command impartiality was particularly important. Impartiality of command effected not only working relationships of the players but further complicated the unity of the entire operation. Grenada was a no notice operation to rescue Americans detained against their will. Due in part to a lack of command impartiality and unfamiliarity, especially towards the Special Operations Forces, this operations focus was not complementary to the NCA's goals and justification for the operation. Policy does not equal planning priority. The premise was the rescue of the hostages and not the forefront of the mission.

Unity of effort is the easiest term with which to comply because of the concept of team work. Yet it is frequently violated. The idea of field-grade officers fighting over who can utilize their equipment sheds some serious doubt on the system at that time. Everyone should be on the

same team trying to accomplish the same goals and finding ways to fight at our most efficient level. Few can argue the success of Grenada but because the operation was cobbled together at the 11th hour with forces and commanders that could be quickly assigned, it was almost certain that there would be a lack of cohesion, information, and unity of effort. Had the students and officials been rescued on the first strike of the operation, it may have allowed a peaceful settlement. By rescuing the Americans the political power of the United States could have been brought to bear on the tiny island. The casualty figures are conflicting in several sources. Nineteen are published and they may not include the SOF personnel. The initial rescue of the Americans may have spared the lives of some nineteen servicemen and several hundred Grenadine soldiers. The most important lesson of "Urgent Fury" must be that "haste makes waste". Too many disparate forces too hastily assembled will result in confusion and mistakes, especially in the face of unexpected resistance.

**COMMAND AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION
FOR OPERATION "URGENT FURY"**

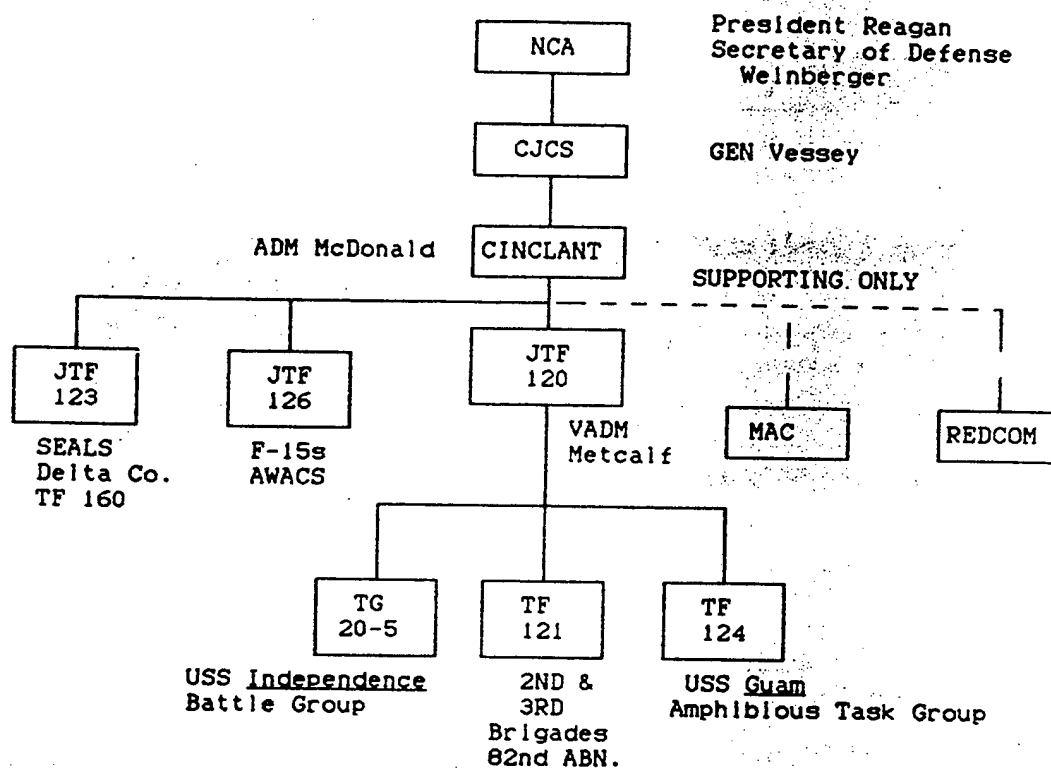


Figure 3.1 Organizational Chart - Grenada, Michael E. Seitz, Watson and Tsouras, *Operation Just Cause*.

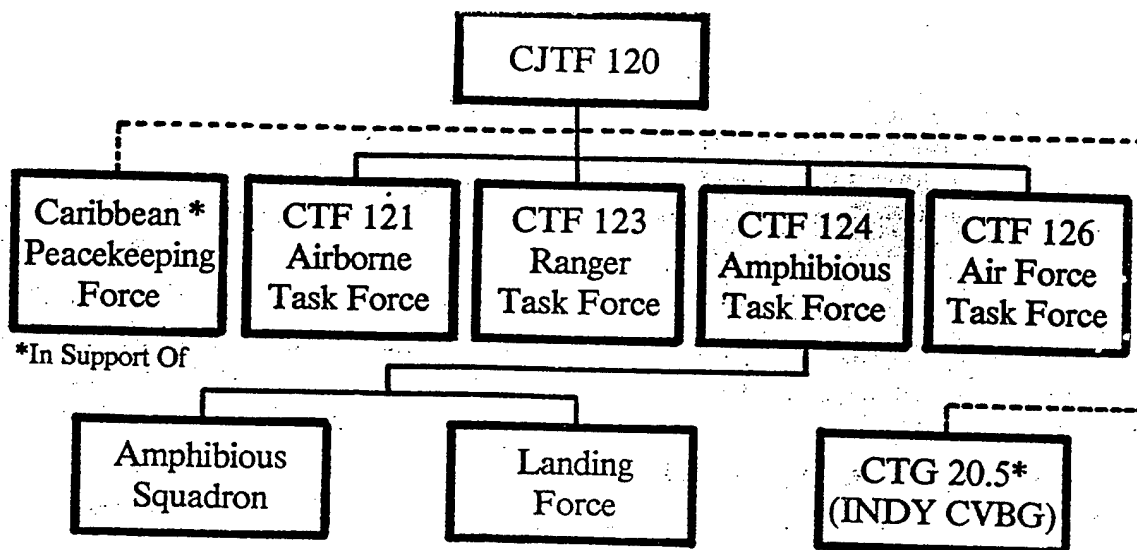
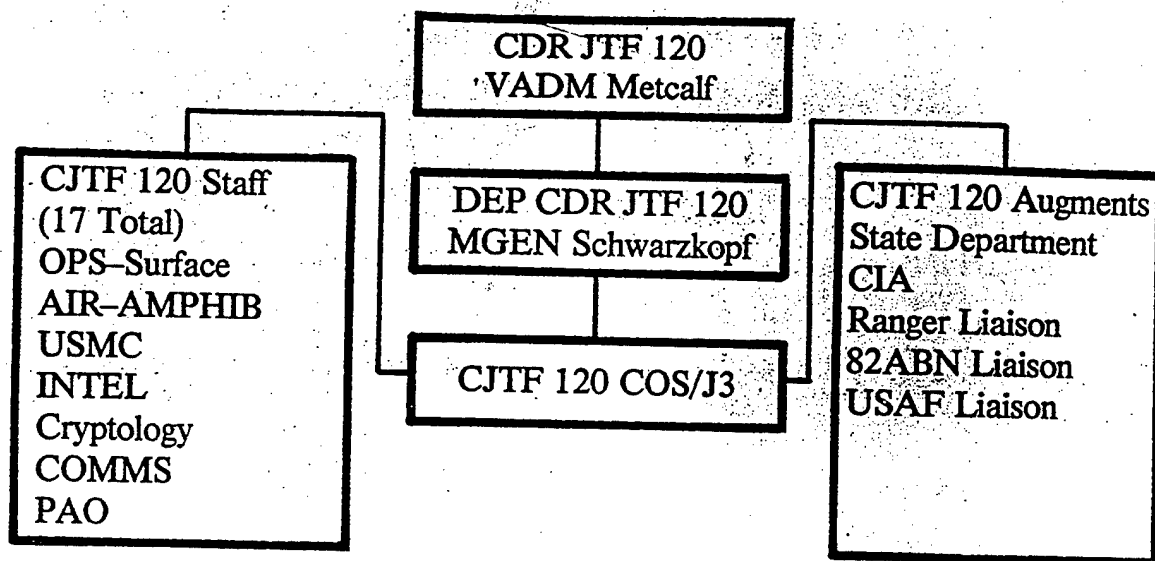


Figure 3.2 Organizational Chart- Grenada, with CJTF 120, Joseph Metcalf, Ambiguity of Command, Decision Making and the Grenada Rescue Operation.

IV. PANAMA (JUST CAUSE)

A. SUMMARY

1. Situation- Political and Military

Relations between Panamanian rebels against Columbia and the United States began prior to the Colombian civil war. Rebels against the Colombian government were backed privately by the United States. During the Colombian Civil War of 1903, Panama gained its independence from Columbia. US interests were militarily and commercially directed towards Panama. During the Theodore Roosevelt administration construction began on the "Path between the Seas". Economically speaking, the Canal area was to gain a great deal by trade and commerce. The new Canal Zone was created to stabilize the area for an American presence.

The Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903, was a poorly developed treaty that left the Panamanian government almost powerless and subject to the will of the United States. The US was granted Canal use rights, occupation rights, and control of a zone of land plus all bottom lands under water in the Canal and these canal rights were for perpetuity. The treaty guaranteed US interests security from intervention. Panamanian diplomats were not pleased with this agreement, however, it was accepted by Panama because of fear of reprisals from either the US or Colombia.¹

The US frequently influenced politics either by diplomatic or military means.² Not until 1936, did the Panamanian people push for sovereignty over the Canal Zone. The US promised

¹ Bruce Watson, Donald Mabry, William H. Drohan, Michael R. Hathaway, Susan G. Horwitz, Lorenzo Crowell, Michael E. Seitz, *Operation Just Cause, The US Intervention in Panama*, Boulder, Co., Bruce W. Watson and Peter G. Tsouras, Westview Press, 1991, p. x.

² The Panamanian Army was disbanded because the treaty in 1903 gave the Canal's protection to the United States. US troops were sent to Panama in 1918, and 1925. In 1921, a battleship and four hundred marines were sent.²

equality of treatment for the Panamanians in 1936, but this was over ruled in 1939 by the US Senate. The US reserved the right to intervene militarily as we deemed necessary. US troops were there to defend the Canal against outside aggression but on a few occasions they were used to quell civil disturbances within the Republic.

World War II brought an increased US military presence. The Cuban Revolution of 1959, created a wave of anti Imperialist and anti-American feelings all over Latin America. These sentiments built up pressure against the US and led us to offer more skilled positions to the Panamanians in the Canal Zone.³ But by the late sixties, very little had changed: treaties were unratified and sovereignty issues regained momentum within the Panamanian population.

In the area of diplomatic relations, some improvements were seen. During the sixties, Panamanian President Hiari allowed the US to expand military operations. The School of Americas was opened and began training the Latin American militaries. This school was to teach all types of military training. Handling officers and non-commissioned officers alike, they were taught tactics and leadership under US doctrine. A large shortcoming of this training was that the School of Americas lacked instruction on the fundamentals of the democratic society. This left military solutions for political problems. Special Forces personnel were then forward deployed in Panama to conduct counter-insurgency training throughout Latin America.⁴

The seventies saw the Presidential government of Marco Robles, being heavily pressured by Colonel Omar Torrijos, who was an advocate of Panamanian independence and sovereign control over the Canal Zone. President Jimmy Carter sought to gain favor with the Latin Americas by gestures of good faith. In the process, Carter sought to improve US relations with an

³ Mabry, p.5-7.

⁴ Mabry, p. 6-7. Two of the most notable graduates of the School of Americas were Omar Torrijos and Manuel Antonio Noriega.

agreement with Panama. The Carter-Torrijos Treaty signed in 1978 returned the US Canal and the Zone to the Panamanian Government by the year 2000.

One of his most trusted officers was Captain Manuel Noriega of the Panamanian Army. Manuel Noriega steadily sought a close friendship with the United States although many thought it to be a sordid process. He became involved with the CIA and the US Army's 407th Military Intelligence Brigade which specialized in intelligence collection within Latin America.

Torrijos had planned on recreating a democratic society in 1984 through the exercise of free elections. He died in 1981 in a mysterious plane crash. Noriega then became the kingpin of Panama and ruled as suited his own increasingly corrupt purposes. Noriega solidified his power over Panama by eliminating his rivals. By the mid-eighties his international as well as local image had changed from being a nationalist hero to that of a plain thug.

As the eighties progressed, many allegations were made that he was a known drug trafficker and had fostered connections with the Cuban government. His problems hit their apex when it was discovered he ordered the killing of Hugo Spadafora his number one political rival and open critic of Noriega's drug dealings. There was wide spread rioting against Noriega by the Panamanian people over this issue. The US Senate even passed Resolution 239 calling for Noriega's resignation. Seemingly he ignored the warning and sought Latin American help to lessen the US pressure. In March 1988, there was an attempted coup by members of his defense force. Noriega easily put down this attempt and imprisoned the leaders who were his opponents.⁵

"Panamanian public opinion definitely turned against Noriega and in favor of US military intervention when he stole the May 1989 elections and ordered his Dignity Battalions

⁵ Mabry, p.12.

(Digbats) to beat the opposition presidential and vice presidential candidates when they led a massive protest of the electoral fraud.”⁶ In October of 1989, Noriega faced another coup attempt which was quickly quelled. The perpetrators of the coup were then executed.

Growing harassment of US personnel and their families by the PDF and Digbats escalated. On June 16, 1988 an Army private and his eighteen-year old wife were assaulted by an individual alleged to be a PDF member. The private was locked in the trunk of their car while the wife was raped and beaten. US troop levels immediately were increased to roughly 1300 US soldiers. The final event triggering the invasion was the murder of US Navy LT. Robert Paz on December 16, 1989. LT Paz was a passenger when the car in which he was riding crossed a PDF checkpoint and guards fired on the vehicle killing him.⁷

On the morning of 17 December 1989, President Bush signed the action order for the invasion of Panama. The eighteenth and nineteenth were used as media days to condition the public stating that military options had not been ruled out. H-hour was set as 0100hrs 21 December 1989.

2. Mission - Concept of the Operation

This was to be the first test of the new command structure that had been developed after the C2 problems from Desert One and Grenada. In response to those problems, a new organizational structure had been developed. This new structure relied on the use of a Joint Task Force which was broken into service component units comprised of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. The National Command Authority (NCA) implements command and control of

⁶ Mabry, p.13. Dignity Battalions were civilian militia units formed and equipped by Noriega to be a check and balance against military coup attempts.

⁷ Susan G. Horowitz, *Indications and Warning Factors*, Boulder, Co., Bruce W. Watson and Peter G. Tsouras, Westview Press, 1991, p. 52.

policy through the Commander of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS).⁸ (See Fig. 4.1) The theater combatant commander creates a unified command to serve as the functional commander and special operations component commander.

The Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, no longer meant an ad-hoc assembly of units to represent their services under a short notice commander. All of the participants were at the outset to be brought into the planning and executing of the operation. Previous operations had murky chains of command. Operation "Just Cause" was different. The command structure now encompassed clear and definitive guidelines and expertise in command. USSOCOMs creation gave the warfighting CINC the added benefit of better trained and resourced forces. It also gave the CINCs the Special Operations Command (SOC). The SOC created a permanently assigned commander and staff for the advising of the theater CINC.

3. Concept of the Operation

I will illustrate the importance of the variables at all levels of war. Joint Task Force (JTF) Panama was divided into six task forces. They were called Task Force Red, Task Force Atlantic, Task Force Bayonet, Task Force Pacific, Task Force Semper Fi, Task Force Black, plus other forces which were military police and aviation units.

Task Force Red was assigned two objectives. The first was to seize Rio Hato Military base and the second was to seize Tocumen/Torrijos airport. Once these points were secure follow on forces would create an airhead at these locations.

⁸ JCS Pub. 3.05.3, *Joint Special Operations Operational Procedures*, 25 August 1993, p. III-3.

Task Force Pacific was to reinforce the seizing of the airfield and then conduct air assaults to neutralize key areas. It's span of control stretched from the Pacific Coast of Panama to the middle of the isthmus.

Task Force Atlantic was to secure Fort Sherman, the Gatun Locks and neutralize the Coco Solo naval base. This PDF naval station was of great importance because of its close proximity to US housing. Their last mission was the PDF supply base at Gamboa and the prisons located at Gamboa and Renacer.

Task Force Bayonet would seize PDF headquarters, the Comandancia, and several key facilities around Balboa. The last missions were to secure various security and civil military objectives throughout Panama City.

Task Force Semper Fi was responsible for a road block along the Inter-American Highway and several PDF installations west of the canal. Those troops would also secure US installations consisting of Rodman Naval Station, the Naval Ammunition Depot, Howard Airforce Base and the Arrijan Tank Farm.

Task Force Atlantic's mission was to secure and protect Americans in Gamboa and was responsible for the PDF 8th Infantry Company, the PDF Naval Infantry Company, Madden Dam and the electrical center at Cerro Tigre.

The Military Police (MP) missions were to operate prisoner of war collection points, control traffic and conduct searches through various locations. The aviation task force was to support all operations on the isthmus. The total airflow for Just Cause was approximately 237

fixed wing aircraft plus over 60 helicopters.⁹ The sheer number of aircraft demonstrated the size of the operation.

The Special Operations were under Task Force Black. Its missions varied widely. The first priority was the rescue of the captives held by Noriega's defense force. Key targets in the operation were the observation of the Battalion 2000 base at Fort Cimarron and the Pacora River Bridge. The Cerro Azul radio tower was an important objective because it provided Noriega the capability to broadcast anti-American slogans and rally opposition. Other SOF missions included the surveillance of locations frequented by Noriega, the destruction of water craft and the elimination of air assets for his possible escape.¹⁰

4. Operational Guidance from the Operations Order (OPORD)

The Operation Order (OPORD) for the entire operation was very specific. The mission was to conduct joint offensive operations to neutralize the PDF and other combatants, as required, so as to protect US lives. Under the execution section more specific and exact guidance was given to the units to ensure their priority of missions. The first mission was to protect US lives and property, giving soldiers the right to defend themselves, plus all other US personnel located in the country. The execution section of the operations order stated the way in which the commander envisioned or intended the targets to be undertaken. The operations order stated that the units will prepare to interdict, on order with air fires the objective of Torrijos/Tocumen and Rio Hato and to prevent the movement of reinforcements.

⁹ General (Ret) Carl Stiner, interview conducted in Sept. 1996, approximate length 25 minutes.

¹⁰ Lorenzo Crowell, *Operation Just Cause, The US Intervention in Panama*, "The Anatomy of Just Cause: The Forces Involved, the Adequacy of Intelligence and Its Success as a Joint Operation", Boulder, Co., Bruce W. Watson and Peter G. Tsouras, Westview Press, 1991, p. 71-79.

Most of the objectives lay in Panama City to the south and any movement could have been seen as reinforcing. In the concept of the operation section of the operations order, the listing of missions gave the capture of Noriega its sixth in priority. The underlying meaning of the capture of Noriega was a decrease of the fear of retaliation for cooperating with the Americans¹¹ The rescue of US citizens was given, first priority and a great deal of effort was exercised in this area. In the OPORD missions were listed in priority of importance. Number one was the protection of US citizens and great emphasis was placed on this.

The positioning order prior to H-hour was given in a subsequent paragraph. This paragraph specifically mentioned Pacora River Bridge. The deliberate actions section stated that surveillance would have begun prior to H-hour and at H-hour offensive operations may begin. An additional statement to the reconnaissance and surveillance missions was being prepared to interdict PDF forces.

Carefully in the coordinating instructions section of the operations order, the priority of missions was listed as follows: protection of US lives, and neutralization of the PDF. Lastly are the rules of engagement. The rules of engagement stated: effective H-hour the Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) and all parts thereof are deemed hostile. It also clarified vehicle traffic as legal targets.

Other specific statements pertained to the reconnaissance and surveillance operations prior to H-hour, these statements allowed the use of the peacetime rules of engagement limiting offensive operations. One of the last rules of engagement limits the level of destruction. These

¹¹ LTG Schoomaker, phone interview on 11 October 1996, approx. Length 45 min.

rules required the avoidance of unnecessary damage to public works such as bridges and would no longer allow the total destruction of key targets like the Pacora River Bridge.¹²

5. Outcome of the Operation

Operation Just Cause was an overwhelming military success. Few missions failed and most received grand accolades. In this analysis, I will demonstrate the success of the mission but attempt to show how we might have done better. I will quickly review the missions and highlight the areas enhanced by USSOCOM in the following analysis.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) operated unilaterally in support of General Purpose Forces (GPF). Follow on forces were dependent upon the accomplishment of the SOF missions and their language capability. The seizure of the airfields and the isolation of PDF reinforcements allowed the expansion of the footholds. The overall intent of the OPORD was to protect US civilians during the execution of the invasion. No one was to be captured by PDF units or Noriega supporters. A brief synopsis of the SOF operations will be discussed and their significance highlighted.

In the beginning of the invasion the first missions conducted were the rescue of the hostages held by Noriega. The initial missions went very well with the hostages being returned unharmed.

Task Force Red seized Rio Hato and Torrijos/Tocumen airports and were reinforced by follow on forces of the 82nd ABNDIV and 7th ID.

The careful seizure of the Cerro Azul tower was a success thus negating the ability by Noriega's supporters to transmit any messages calling for the resistance to the invasion forces. No US personnel were killed and the missions were accomplished on schedule.

¹² Dr. Yates, Operations Order, Joint Task Force- Panama and the US, Case No. 91-0629A, declassified 28 May 1991.

Pacora River Bridge was another resounding success cutting PDF reinforcements to the initial US H-hour missions. The bridge illustrated the benefit of the correct use of a force multiplier to enhance an operation. No US personnel were killed at the bridge and all objectives of the CINC's original requirements were met. The PDF forces were interdicted, the vehicles were stopped, and this was conducted with a minimum of casualties and damage to the both the enemy and US forces.¹³

Tinijitas was unsuccessful. This Army SOF unit was to observe if mortars were to be used at Tinijitas against the US forces. The unit was never able to observe the location because it arrived too late.

The SEALs sank several boats in the harbor with relative ease. They also were to stop the departure of Noriega's jet at Piatilla airport. This mission was successful but cost the lives of four SEALs. They were rescued by units of the 82nd ABNDIV upon their arrival.

TF Atlantic quickly crushed the PDF in their area, but only after a late start. The US forces were delayed because of weather. Portions of the 82nd Airborne Division (ABNDIV) were delayed at Fort Bragg because of an unexpected ice storm leaving their aircraft's wings iced. Parts of the 7th Infantry Division (ID) from California were also delayed due to extreme fog. Despite their late arrivals they quickly accomplished their missions. The 7th ID arrived at Rio Hato and established security and began to expand its control. The Cerra Tigre dam and Madden dam were seized protecting electrical power and operation of the canal.

Task Force Semper Paratus secured the Bridge of Americas and then moved on Arraijan Tank Farm. They encountered steady resistance at the farm but took the bridge relatively unopposed.

¹³ Crowell, *Operation Just Cause, The US Intervention in Panama*, "The Anatomy of Just Cause: The Forces Involved, The Adequacy of Intelligence, and Its Success as a Joint Operation", p. 83-94.

The majority of the 82nd ABNDIV made up Task Force Pacific. Although arriving late, the 82nd landed and relieved the SOF unit holding Pacora River Bridge and then assaulted Fort Cimarron. Both were successful missions.

Overall the invasion was very successful for SOF units. Most of the missions were completed successfully. Several follow on missions were completed by SOF units for the benefit of all US forces. The MA Bell operations which were the capturing of cuartels by US forces was accomplished without fighting. The operations were simple and involved two forces. The first force, comprised of Army Special Forces personnel, would make contact by phone and ask for the surrender of the cuartel. They would then fly in to the cuartel and take the surrender while a battalion of US Rangers waited to seize the area if resistance was encountered. Later the infantry mission was passed to other available units but the negotiations with the PDF were maintained by Special Forces personnel. The other mission was the pacification of Panama. This pacification was everything from the finding of arms caches to the intelligence gathering also done by Army Special Forces in conjunction with general purpose forces (GPF).¹⁴

B. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF COMMAND

The overall command arrangement of Just Cause was extremely well thought out. LTG Stiner had placed a personal touch on the operation by keeping the normal structure of the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) and gearing it by mission priority. This was accomplished by making the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) the lead unit and its commander the head of the JSOTF. The commander of the Theater Special Operations Command (SOC) would normally command the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). This would be for the SOF commander of Southern Command (SOCSOUTH) Col. Jacobelly would be the

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 83-95.

JSOTF commander and control the operations as they unfolded.¹⁵ The SOCSOUTH command lacked the staff to maintain control of an operation of this magnitude. LTG Stiner saw this problem and in turn called upon MG Wayne Downing to replace Col Jacobelly. This was done because of the immense strength of MG Downing's Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) staff. Staffed and equipped to conduct joint operations, JSOC's command of the situation seemed very practical.¹⁶ This was not a rehearsed situation. The situation, moved Col Jacobelly, down one level to head the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOTF) missions.

The operational priority seemed to have been upheld as missions were handed down. The idea of inserting a key interdiction position at H-hour coincided with the overall commander's intent. By inserting at H-hour, all targets became coup de main operations according to the intent of the commander.

Pacora River Bridge was key to several US missions. To understand the importance of the objective, a planner would have had to understand the implied priority given in the operations order. Engagement of the enemy prior to H-hour was prohibited for the security of other missions, but at H-hour all units had to consider all PDF as hostile. The allowance of enemy traffic prior to H-hour illustrated that limited reinforcement had been anticipated and was acceptable. The interdiction of armored forces by lightly armed units necessitated prior positioning and preparation in the objective area. The lack of similar command decisions on the prior positioning of certain forces demonstrated the importance of the rescue missions. This disparity between insertion times as in the cases of Paitilla and Pacora illustrated incongruent criteria triggering command decisions. Both were valuable targets but the supporting mission

¹⁵ Michael E. Seitz, *Operation Just Cause, The US Intervention in Panama*, "Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence (C3I) Factors", p. 105- 112.

¹⁶ Stiner interview.

(Pacora) was inserted only at H-hour. Paitilla inserted prior which indicated the capture of Noriega was higher in priority than the establishment of solid footholds. Why not both? Pacora could then have supported other H--hour missions.

The Ma Bell operations were a fantastic display of unity of command. The quick thinking of Special Forces personnel added flexibility to a rigid plan. Force was not always necessary. In this instance the use of restraint allowed no collateral damage and the ability to reinstate Panamanian officials to keep law and order. The reinstatement of officials was overlooked in Panama City where widespread looting and banditry occurred. Many of the young US soldiers in the units in Panama City spoke Spanish but lacked the maturity to reinstate order. Had this been done using the more mature Special Forces personnel to reconstruct the infrastructure a great deal of damage could have been avoided. This was not planned so the command had to react to the situation rather than institute the solution.¹⁷

The Pacification plan was implemented later in January after most of the looting had been done. Other areas needed attention but were dealt with slowly. Camps were emerging that were composed of squatters. People already living in the area of these camps wanted them removed. The civil affairs units should have rectified this situation immediately. These squatters caused problems and were eventually removed by force. This was a lack of command guidance. The assumption was made that too many other things were occurring and priorities had to be maintained. Returning the country to the host nation forces was the desired end state in all operations. The quicker this could be accomplished with the reinstatement of host nation police and civilians the better. It took many years to solve many of the problems created by the short sightedness of this plan.

¹⁷ LTC Higgins and LTC Cleveland interviews conducted September 1996.

The use of the Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) had manifested itself. This was the first operation in which the command structure attempted to conduct joint operations between different units. The SOCCE was a unit composed of a B-team. This B-team was a liaison team for the GPF units. The SOCCE advised the conventional (GPF) commander on the capabilities of SOF and on the deconfliction of ongoing missions.

C. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF EFFORT

The mission for Just Cause was to neutralize the PDF and combatant forces and protect US lives. This is clear and leaves little doubt of the desired outcome. The structure of the JSOTF is very clear. LTG Stiner added his own forceful personality to the operation. He envisioned a plan calling for a large coup de main operation. One fast strike to destroy completely or render the opposition ineffective. The plan called for every major Panamanian force along the Panama City to Colon north-south axis and along the Fort Cimarron to Rio Hato east-west axis either to be hit directly or blocked from moving into Panama City at H-hour.¹⁸ (See Map 4-1) A task force to accomplish this mission had been established through a great deal of prior preparation.

Missions were distributed to different entire service units to ensure unity of effort in each mission. Unlike past operations where mixing was done to greater or lesser extents, this operation maintained a unified effort for each service element adhering to the unit missions. The task force configuration kept trained units together to perform a task. The combat service and combat service support units were utilized with clear and defined missions that were part of the overall mission in Panama. The lack of emphasis on the pacification of Panama City and the control of lawlessness was lacking in the intent of the operation. In essence, the units were a true

¹⁸ Crowell, *Operation Just Cause, The US Intervention in Panama*, "The Anatomy of Just Cause: The Forces Involved, The Adequacy of Intelligence, and Its Success as a Joint Operation", Boulder, Co., Bruce W. Watson and Peter G. Tsouras, Westview Press, 1991, p. 69.

joint effort within the plan. The limited scope of the plan left many missions with no clear way to achieve the desired end state.

Despite the short warning time, the units were ready because the missions had been rehearsed prior to the operation for many months.¹⁹ Few of the units, SOF or GPF, were attempting missions for the first time. The emphasis placed on the SOF missions and their value was illustrated during the first critical hours of the operation. Each of the missions, whether rescues or seizures of targets was given the main priority and planning was done around them. Prior to H-hour the effort mentioned in the operation was to implace surveillance forces whose followon mission was to interdict the movement of PDF reinforcements while larger US forces maneuvered into position.²⁰ One of the more important missions was to interdict PDF forces at the Pacora River Bridge on the road between the Torrijos/Tocumen Airport and Fort Cimarron. Mission priority was established at the operational level of war in this instance but was not maintained. Had this priority been maintained the scheme of maneuver would have put greater emphasis on the early emplacement of such forces. The breakdown appeared to have occurred between the operational and tactical levels of issuance. In the original operations order (OPORD) it was clearly stated and defined. Unity of effort was not understood when making the calls at various levels between services to preposition. Different services allowed different insertion times. This reflects different training methods by different services. Tunnel vision had occurred and was maintained for the bridge. The emphasis had become the rescue of the hostages. It was now affecting the other missions.

¹⁹ Stiner interview.

²⁰ Crowell, *Operation Just Cause, The US Intervention in Panama*, "The Anatomy of Just Cause: The Forces Involved, The Adequacy of Intelligence, and Its Success as a Joint Operation", p. 72.

Unity of effort was solid within the plan. The seizure of the airfields was quick and accomplished with a minimum of US casualties. Destruction at the airports was light and did not hamper follow-on operations. The US forces quickly began reinforcing the troops already there and, with the use of Special Forces personnel, many PDF personnel surrendered after being asked to do so in their native language.

SOF personnel aided the GPF units, by capturing the radio and TV tower at Cerro Azul. By capturing the tower, many would-be resistors were unable to unite their efforts.

The execution of Pacora River Bridge eliminated reinforcements to established PDF units. By reducing the numbers of military and paramilitary forces the plan's effort shortened the duration of fighting.

A decision lacking unity of effort was the choice to place munitions from the F-117 stealth bombers a short distance away from the barracks. Soldiers interviewed stated that it was a beehive of activity when they jumped onto the objective. The bombing strictly contradicts the effort of the invasion force. SOF units work best using surprise and violence of action because of their short window of opportunity and superiority during the operation. By utilizing the bombers at that moment, this mission lost relative superiority and SOF units became conventionalized. This was a poor utilization of assets. Lacking overwhelming superiority in numbers, SOF units then had to rely on tenacity rather than obtaining a tactical advantage. What damage would have been caused by an F-117 attack other than the elimination of enemy soldiers? Very little collateral damage would have been done that was not done during the ensuing firefight.

Careful consideration should have been given to the limited window of surprise and priority of missions. The Pacora Bridge target may have been presented to the commander but

key decision making information may have been left out. This is key to training and understanding the intent of the commander.

D. ANALYSIS OF SIMPLICITY

Just Cause was kept simple in concept but was very complex in fact. The sheer number of aircraft participating on the night of the invasion was staggering. The actual number was over 300 during the operation.²¹ Keeping unit integrity by service was a great benefit to the operators and logistical personnel. Services tended to work best with their own personnel. Limiting the number of interactions between differing participants strengthened the plan.

The mishap at Paitilla airfield has been blamed on many factors; rules of engagement, tactics of the unit, and other contributing factors. The mission to observe the area the day before was denied by MG Downing but was allowed after interservice rivalry arose. The SEAL's mission was to be simple and the parameters changed and so did the tactics as a result. The addition and subtraction of the various rules complicated the understanding by the unit. The idea of pushing equipment onto the airfield and moving into the hanger were not tactically sound.²² Too much movement and activity caused the loss of surprise. Once engaged they were lightly armed and were overwhelmed. They were able to hold out long enough to get assistance from units of the 82nd ABNDIV.

The rescue mission was a complicating part of the overall mission. Had the rescue of the limited number of hostages gone poorly, would the other missions been affected? Yes, to some extent the hostages could have been used as bartering means. The lives of a few did need to be weighed but great care needed be given to other missions. The life of a few hostages was

²¹ Stiner interview.

²² Malcolm McConnell, *Just Cause: The Real Story of America's High-Tech Invasion of Panama*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1991, p. 47-58.

weighed greater than the twenty odd men at Pacora River Bridge and other similar missions within Panama.

E. ANALYSIS OF TIMING

LTG Stiner attempted to advance H-hour but this was complicated. The rigid time schedules required to regulate the amount of aircraft virtually eliminated timing flexibility. Units had departed from various bases around the world. Aircraft were only able to travel at certain speeds, and then could make up no more than a few minutes in a flight plan.

The advancement of the time schedules was not complete. Advancing H-hour in concept set all units ahead. In this operation it alerted the PDF to recall its units and therefore advanced the PDF and certain SOF units fifteen minutes. The time advancement left other US forces on the old time schedule and the PDF with fifteen extra minutes not planned for in our timing. This limited the element of surprise for the units that were not conducting hostage type scenarios. Yet, surprise was in the intent of a coup de main operation.

The possibility of earlier targets initiating a PDF response should have been anticipated at all levels. LTG Stiner's decision to advance the time table left absolutely no room for single shot missions. The pace of operations had an impact on the missions of other objectives. At the bridge, the PDF unit was alerted with the initial US engagements and began to recall and load about fifteen minutes before the scheduled H-hour. Adding the drive time, and recall time, one observed how the bridge team should have been pre-positioned.

F. CONCLUSIONS

The improvement of command since operation Urgent Fury is very evident in Just Cause. The emergence of the task force organization giving the capability to operate within a

predetermined structure had emerged. It was customized to fit the priority missions. But it was not reorganized from scratch. The use of standard C2 structures was adhered to in nearly all cases.

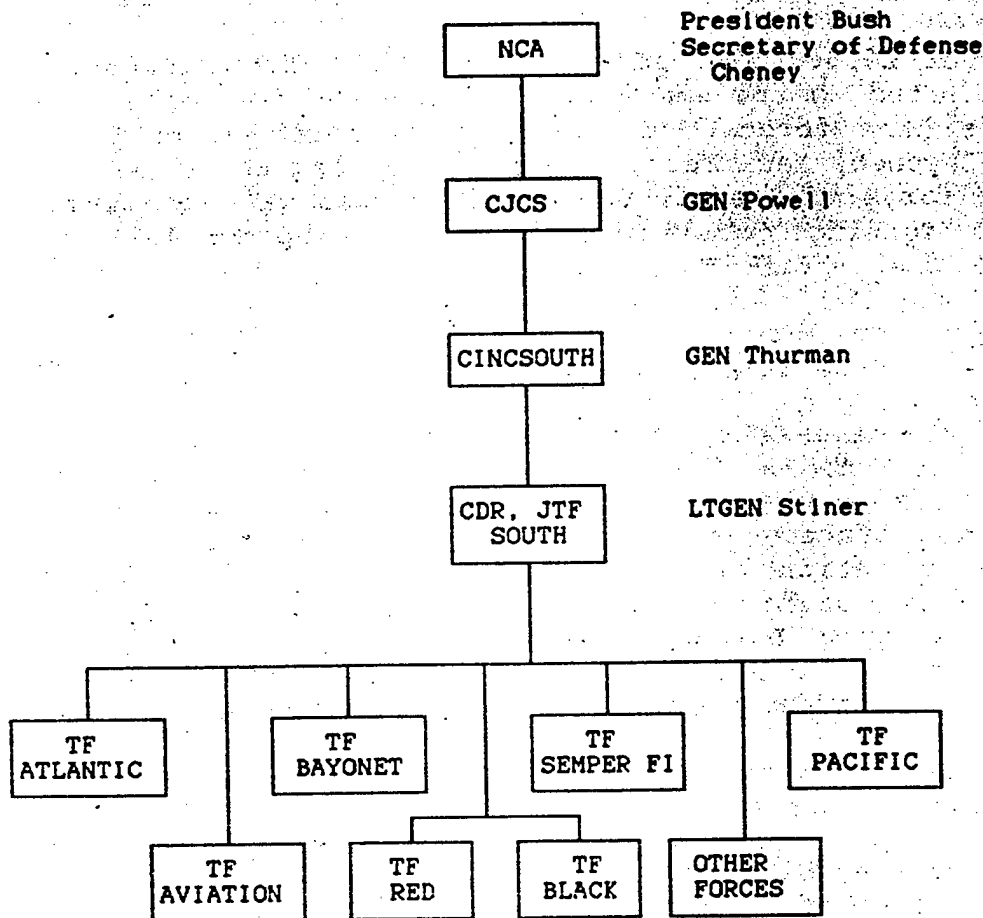
In all operations, the impartiality of the commander is essential. Impartiality is not completely evident in Just Cause. Another question arises in the area of unity of effort. The Grenada operation lacked simple parts such as maps for ground units and cooperation between services. Here in Panama one observes how the commanders intent is transferred to the tactical situations. In Just Cause, the priority of hostage rescue and the capture of Noriega are given so much emphasis that other missions take on hostage rescue attributes. Does this mean that they are of less priority? No, but when the operation is observed with partiality towards service or background it effects other missions.

The enhanced training capabilities are evident in the smooth integration of forces from all services during the operation. Still, SOF's role as a force multiplier here is neglected in lieu of structural parochialism's. Units and their staffs must practice missions as they are intended to function to facilitate mission success. Higher command seemed to function much better in this operation and many of the mishaps from Grenada were avoided. Greater command and control assets were available. The addition of the SOCCE and more interoperable resources equaled success. Few missions were planned as a response to an enemy initiative. This was a deliberate action conducted against the PDF and has fewer allowable excuses for its short comings.

Just Cause had relatively few casualties for a prepared defender, illustrating the power of a well prepared and rehearsed integrated operation. Care should be given to future operations by higher headquarters during the execution of integrated operations to ensure the true intent under unity of command and effort are clearly understood. Commanders owe their impartiality to the

subordinate units. An understanding of the commander's intent allows staff members the ability to give correct guidance to better assist with the operation. The rejection of the reconnaissance mission the day before Paitilla was a smart call. Pacora was not the same and it is understandable how the confusion could arise. Future operations involving units conducting hostage rescue missions should be carefully weighed to make sure they are not over influencing the operation.

**COMMAND AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION
FOR OPERATION "JUST CAUSE"**



Note: Other Forces included 16th MP Battalion, and Supporting Naval and Air Force forces. Each had a direct line to the JTF Commander.

FIGURE 4.1 Organizational Chart - Just Cause, Michael E. Seitz, Watson and Tsouras, Operation Just Cause.

V. SOMALIA (TASK FORCE RANGER)

A. INTRODUCTION

In 1991, Somalia was the locale of a terrible civil war. It broke out after president Siad Barre, lost control of various contending factions within the country. The two most powerful leaders, Mohamed Aideed and Ali Mahdi, began to battle over control of the city of Mogadishu because of its seaports and airfields. This inter-clan conflict continued to rage until a cease-fire was negotiated between the two. In addition to the conflict between the clans, the worst drought in years hit the region, causing nearly one million deaths and threatening millions more. Somalia has had a history of external government interventions trying either to help or influence the nation in some fashion. Both the USSR and the US had dumped large amounts of money and supplies into the region as they competed for influence during the Cold War. In 1992, numerous relief agencies began a massive humanitarian aid operation.

B. POLICY AND A SUMMARY OF THE OPERATION

US troops arrived in Somalia and began a mission of peace keeping and humanitarian assistance on August 15, 1992. The Somalia operation was to involve a coalition of troops from twenty one nations under a UN flag. The mission was to apply the force of the international system to help feed the thousands of starving refugees created by the drought and civil war. Fighting was ongoing, requiring the UN forces to restore peace before they could end the starvation. Humanitarian assistance operations is a misnomer because it does not acknowledge armed conflict. Any operation combining combat operations with humanitarian operations is peace enforcement.

Is there a difference in these missions? Yes, peace keeping results in cooperation between belligerent parties who accept assistance from a third party. Humanitarian assistance is the entire spectrum of efforts by national governments, international agencies and non-government organizations to cope with natural or man made disasters. Peace enforcement is similar to peace keeping except the belligerents do not want, and may resist, the assistance.

The UN Charter is used to authorize the implementation of such operations. This charter does not specifically denote how the actions will be undertaken, but it does seek to “maintain international peace and security.” Chapter VI of the Charter deals with the peaceful settlement of international disputes. New terms fostered after the end of the Cold War, such as Peace keeping and Peace making, were and are not fully understood. In Chapter VII, the area of peace enforcement is addressed. It discusses blockades, enforcement of sanctions and direct military action. In between, and not discussed has become known as the informal “Chapter six and a half.” “Chapter six and a half” promotes conflict prevention, demobilization, cantonment of weapons, and actions taken to guarantee freedom of movement within a country.¹ The idea of any one country conducting unilateral operations is not the premise for UN operations but is a right maintained by the United States. This right was why the US was conducting the hunt for Aideded, which will be the center of our interest in this chapter.

President Bush had showed an interest in the areas of Bosnia and Somalia. During discussions with his advisors he learned the details of each. His decision was to assist Somalia, by humanitarian assistance, by helping to open the roadways and then passing the operation off to the United Nations, meanwhile delaying a decision regarding Bosnia.²

¹ Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*, National Defense University Press Publications, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC ISBN-0-16-045577-4, January 1995, p. 3.

² Dick Cheney, Former Secretary of Defense, phone interview conducted Sept. 96, approximate length 55 minutes.

The operation began under UN Council Resolution 751 with the insertion into Somalia of fifty UNOSOM observers in April of 1992. These observers had little effect on the civil war within the country. July 1992 saw an increase in airlifts of food. Next President Bush ordered operation Provide Relief to begin. It was to last from August to December of 1992.

This decision saw the arrival of US forces in three distinct phases: "Operation Provide Relief, a humanitarian assistance mission; Operation Restore Hope, an operation that combined humanitarian assistance with limited military action; and UNOSOM II, a peace enforcement mission involving active combat and nation-building."³ United States Marine Corps units were to take control of airport and port facilities. The factions in Somalia were warned prior to the operation that no tolerance would be given for aggression or threatening acts. The initial landings went relatively unopposed. The few individuals who attempted to influence operations were quickly subdued.⁴

Central Command, or CENTCOM, was given the mission to provide "military assistance in support of emergency humanitarian relief to Kenya and Somalia." Dramatic increases of supplies were seen, with daily averages rising to approximately 150 metric tons. Even with the increases, the suffering grew worse.⁵ During this time, US liaison teams from Special Forces were placed with the faction leaders. Their assignment was to facilitate communication between the parties.⁶ But security of the humanitarian assistance forces was now becoming questionable.

³ Allard, p. 13-14.

⁴ SGT Jeffrey V Escalderon and SGT Travis S. Mitchell, USMC snipers, interview conducted at Camp Pendelton on 17-18 October 1996.

⁵ Allard, p. 15.

⁶ MG Tagney, Former CENTCOM Commander, interview conducted on 7 October 1996, approx. 45 minutes.

President Bush's goal was to stabilize the area and provide humanitarian assistance. The United Nations Task Force (UNITAF) was also created to accomplish this mission.(See Fig 5.1) Then CENTCOM's mission was expanded to " When directed by the NCA, USCINCCENT will conduct joint/combined military operations in Somalia to secure the major air and sea ports, key installations and food distribution points, to provide open and free passage of relief organization operations, and to assist UN/NGO's in providing humanitarian relief under UN auspices."⁷ By early 1993 the UN mission in UNITAF had created a much more peaceful Somalia. Levels of violence had fallen dramatically and so had starvation.⁸

In May of 1993 the UN mission was changed to: conduct military operations to consolidate, expand, and maintain a secure environment for the advancement of humanitarian aid, economic assistance, and political reconciliation in Somalia. The UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was reluctant to shift to UNOSOM II until US forces had effectively disarmed the factions. The factions had been at war for years and depended on weapons. Disarmament strategies require a secure environment. This had to be achieved either through negotiated agreement or force. Terms were agreed upon by the factions, but the presence of a UN security force would be needed for a longer time then previously thought. The factions wanted security and protection from each other.⁹ Yet it was at this time that the liaison teams were removed from the factions and the peacekeepers effectively stopping communication with them. The loss of communication caused a void of usable intelligence.

The US began pulling out its initial troops from UNOSOM I, who were being replaced by more UN participants. But it was soon discovered that the UN was unable to supply the

⁷ Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*, National Defense University Press Publications, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC ISBN-0-16-045577-4, January 1995, p. 16.

⁸ Walter S. Clarke, "Testing the World's Resolve in Somalia," *Parameters*, Winter 1993-1994, p. 47.

⁹ Col. R Dotto, USMC, Military liaison for Ambassador Oakley, interview on 18 October 1996, Camp Pendelton, Ca. approx. 45 minutes.

UNITAF mission. Meanwhile the mission changed from UNITAF to UNOSOM II, which saw a further reduction in US forces and an increase in the UN force. Only the logistic personnel of the US remained and equipment and supplies were increased. The situation had become more peaceful than it had been for a long time. The number of gunshots wounds and battle related injuries had decreased significantly from when the UN mission began. The program of assistance was ending the famine but decreasing the power base of the warlords. Under the UN presence, tension mounted.

In June of 1993, Pakistani soldiers were ambushed and killed in a firefight with Aideed supporters. This immediately saw the passing of Resolution 837 calling for the apprehension of those responsible. This then led to the US mission to capture Aideed sanctioned by the UN. The UN placed a price on the head of Aideed of \$25,000.

This expansion was to include a raid on the main arms collection point in downtown Mogadishu. It was to be a UN combat operation. CENTCOM had a force package of four AC-130 gunships on hand in a neighboring country for support. The UN operation was undertaken by various multi-national units. Of these, the Pakistani Forces became engaged in a firefight that lasted many hours. The Pakistani units each had Special Forces liaisons with them and called for gunship support. After the engagement was completed the area surrounding the Pakistani firefight was severely damaged by the AC-130s guns. The damage caused by the gunships was severe enough to require their withdrawal back to the US.¹⁰

It was shortly after this period that the events of three and four October unfolded. The Task Force Ranger (TFR) mission was a quick and relatively successful mission if success and

¹⁰ Tagney interview.

failure are judged in the factors of military operations. The basic mission went as follows. An assault unit fastroped into an area near the Olympic Hotel in Mogadishu in order to capture individuals meeting the specific criteria listed in the rules of engagement. This phase of the operation went well, and twenty four prisoners were captured in less than twenty minutes.

At this point the Ranger unit's helicopters, which was a short distance away, were called in to evacuate the prisoners. After loading and beginning departure from the site, one of the helicopters was hit by a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) and went down. Another helicopter much smaller than the others landed and picked up one survivor. The rescue unit then fastroped onto the site of the first crash and helped in defending it. At some time in this part of the operation the QRF was mobilized from MG Montgomery's UN area. During this time a second helicopter was hit and went down less than a mile from the first site. This second aircraft was quickly mobbed by Somalis in the area. As the US QRF was driving towards the second crash site it turned around because of the intense fire. Armor was then requested from the UN. QRF and Pakistani and Malaysian armor responded.

The Rangers had gained fragile control of the first site and had taken refuge in a building to defend themselves from the fire. Constant helicopter gunship support kept the Somalis at bay until the QRF arrived. Once they arrived it took several hours to free the bodies from the helicopter wreckage. Then they evacuated the area and headed for the airfield. It was daylight the next morning when the operation concluded.

These actions caused the loss of eighteen US servicemen. The tactical decisions on the ground that night are deserving of great praise. The planning by the NCA and senior military leaders, however, necessitates a thorough review. Doing so should help to avoid future pitfalls for policy makers and military leadership. Planning doctrine for direct action missions was

available and was used for infiltration and actions at the objective. The planning oversights during the egress phase of the operation were avoidable. Impartiality of the units as well as previously learned lessons should have prevented this failure, which will be the focus of this analysis. Because many of the details remain classified, only unclassified documents will be sourced. Current doctrine, not available at the time, clears up portions of the planning considerations for peace operations.

C. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF COMMAND

The chain of command may be seen in Fig 5.2 and Fig 5.3. On the 3rd and 4th of October 1993 during UNOSOM II, USFORSOM (or UNOSOM II) was commanded by MG Thomas M. Montgomery, a US Army officer. He was the commander of the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) established to support the UN objectives. The commander of Task Force Ranger was MG William Garrison, another Army officer. MG Garrison's chain of command was much simpler and distinctly different from MG Montgomery's. Task Force Ranger reported through CENTCOM, General Hoar and then on to the National Command Authority (NCA).¹¹ Montgomery was the US Forces Commander and reported to CENTCOM, General Hoar, but was also under operational control of the United Nations (UN) acting as the deputy to the UN command.

The area of concern is political awareness of the situation. President Bush's administration believed in overwhelming force when necessary and understood military matters. The Clinton administration was lacking in its understanding of military operations. Elected officials and their staffs have little prior background in the details of military utilization. When a President is receiving his in-brief before assuming office, he and his advisors receive little

¹¹ Allard, p. 57.

familiarization regarding the military application of force. Background is important. Many would feel that once the military option is chosen it should become a military issue. This is not true. Politicians determine national goals and policies that regulate the military's application of force. The policy constrains the military options. In this instance, it affected the force structure by setting limits on personnel, types of equipment and duration of the mission. One suggestion was made that military training be incorporated for the incumbent Commander in Chief and his advisors.¹²

Col. Kenneth Allard, a US Army officer, speaks of the difficult problems in achieving unity of command for a coalition. This is important, and complicates operations involving multiple nations. The lack of complementary military capabilities contained in international forces should be of great concern to US officials. If the UN command is not capable of executing simple logistic functions, how can one expect combat support of advanced forces like the US? It is not possible without the use of close liaison and equipment to gain interoperability. Augmentation of multi-national forces is required for safety, capability and unity. On occasion, forces from other countries arrived without proper equipment such as boots or clothing. Without US logistical help, many forces were incapable of operating at all.

Apparently, the enemy threat was underestimated. Somali tribal forces had been trained and equipped by the Soviets during the seventies. In the eighties Egypt and other Arab countries gave them a great deal of support. Up until 1982 the service academies were still operating, and producing sound officer and enlisted training. The Somalis were formidable opponents, battle tested against the Ethiopians during their two year war from 1977-1979. The army had consisted of almost fifty thousand personnel, equipped with T-55 tanks, BTR-60s and MIG aircraft. Even

¹² Cheney, phone interview.

in the early eighties the Somali Army was well equipped and well disciplined.¹³ As civil war overtook the country, many Soviet trained officers and individuals became in effect warlords. When training has been done previously and implemented in war, even losing armies retain sharp teeth. Yet this prior military training seems to have been down played by US intelligence. In 1992, during protection of VIPs , US Marines learned the need for armor vehicle protection. Several times, armored vehicles were required to move VIPs to safety from Mogadishu during UNOSOM I and UNITAF.¹⁴

A Task Force Ranger (TFR) planner stated that they expected only squad size bands of Somalis. If the threat had increased enough to have increased security operations in support of the UN mission, then a greater danger from threat should have been anticipated. An aspect of the mission on the third of October was the rapid congregation of angry Somalis after the first helicopter was shot down. Soldiers interviewed claim they were told to expect only squad size enemy operations. In an interview, MG Tagney remarked that on occasion hundreds of Somalis gathered in a short period of time armed with all types of weapons.¹⁵ In small units the threat was minimal, but Somalis factions were able to assemble hundreds of people equaling as many as 50 squads. The rocket propelled grenades (RPG) had been used successfully against US helicopters nine days prior to the 3 October raid.¹⁶ Daily reports of crew served weapons and RPGs were common. US Marine snipers interviewed stated that after any military event the Somalis quickly massed into large groups with assorted weapons.¹⁷ Commanders should have noticed this as an

¹³ Frederick Ehrenreich, *Somalia, National Security*, US Government Print Plant, 1982, p.257-258.

¹⁴ CAPT Robb Etnyre, USMC officer, interviewed at the Naval Postgraduate School on 22 October 1996 approx. twenty minutes.

¹⁵ Tagney interview.

¹⁶ Senator Warner and Senator Levin, United States Senate Committee of Armed Services Memorandum titled " *Review of the Circumstances Surrounding the Ranger Raid on October 3-4, 1993 in Mogadishu, Somalia*, dated September 29, 1995 here after refereed to as Senate Memorandum, p. 8.

¹⁷ Escalderon and Mitchell interview.

increased risk to their troops and asked for a change of policy force levels and equipment in keeping with the coming operations.

Secretary of Defense Les Aspin was criticized for not providing armor for the troops. Why move tanks from far off when nearby armored fighting vehicles were available from the Marines? The Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF) which was present in the theater but not in Somalia contained armored personnel carriers and sometimes armor during their deployments for UNOSOM I. This equipment was available for QRFs had it been requested.¹⁸

In post mortems several of the planners and field operators stated that armor would have been an asset and it was a mistake not having it.¹⁹ Had either the armor or gunships been available they could have been kept under TFR control. Sending Bradley fighting vehicles was not needed because of the Marine units in theater. The Marine units could have been made part of the TF Ranger QRF and significantly influenced the operation. The planners should have seen the hazards and not allowed the missions, without more resources.

AC-130 gunships were not on hand because of the damage done on the June 1993 raid of the market mentioned earlier. Yet MG Garrison's unit had rehearsed the missions with AC-130 support. This asset was denied upon request. The personnel limitations and previous collateral damage were given as the reasons for the refusal and seem flimsy in hindsight.

¹⁸ The Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) was not present the night of October 3, 1993 because it had already sailed for Singapore.

¹⁹ Col Nash and Maj Murphy, interviews conducted 30 October 1996 and 25 September 1996 respectively.

Task Force Ranger was not facing an armored opponent. The principle threat was squad size bands of gunmen in an urban environment. The threat vehicles were armed trucks called "technicals," which mounted various guns but posed little significant threat. The urban terrain posed a far greater threat. During urban combat operations, US doctrine calls for far greater forces and mobility. Many of the US wounded received further injuries on the evacuation. They were hit while riding in the trucks which afforded no protection from even small arms. Task Force Ranger's force package lacked the ability to independently operate in an urban environment. This was debated with the Senate in hearings on the raid.²⁰ A SOF direct action mission requires good task organization. The configuration was fine during infiltration and execution, but it lacked the planning necessary to exfiltrate under anything but ideal circumstances. Wishful thinking resulted in a tactical plan that had no provision for the unexpected.

Impartiality is a lesson learned but for this operation MG Garrison indicated:

As for using five ton trucks with sand bags for the October 3-4 raid, if Bradleys were available, of course they would have been better and I hope to hell I would have used them for the Ranger Reaction Force.²¹

This is an answer that is hard to second guess. Yet, change is hard to accept. TF Ranger felt comfortable using the equipment and personnel on hand. They were not accustomed to integrated operations with GPF units. SOF equipped units are light infantrymen who tend to shun mechanized forces. There were many reasons for the lack of integration but parochialism was one major factor. Inexperience with strange machines limits trust in them. It usually takes a catastrophic event such as this one to overcome organizational mindsets. It is certain that armor

²⁰ Senate Memorandum, p. 34.

²¹ Senate Memorandum, p. 33.

would have helped the QRF but it is unknown if they would have planned on using them. Even MG Garrison "hopes" he would have used them.

The execution of the mission was outstanding with the assets on hand. The scope and organization of such a unilateral mission is in question. The command was responsible for the correct unit composition. The SECDEF's rejection of an addition to the UN force package did not apply specifically to Task Force Ranger. Why was Task Force Ranger only given a level of approximately 400 personnel? It was a political constraint based on the false premise that faction forces were insignificant by the summer of 1993. The limit on personnel resulted from false unity of command, and led to an enfeebled unity of effort.

D. ANALYSIS OF UNITY OF EFFORT

The national objectives were understandable for a humanitarian mission in Somalia. The man hunt for Aideed was a great deal different. Few other nations were participants or agreed with the hunt for Aideed. UN Security Council Resolution 837 was passed and called for the capture of those responsible for the Pakistani deaths. Ambassador Howe's insistence lead to Task Force Ranger's deployment.²² This shift in mission was never seen by the US public. Americans believed that the US main effort was still humanitarian when in fact our man hunt had essentially stopped the humanitarian mission.

Why was the lack of international participation important? This was a unilateral US operation and was conducted as one. Many other countries took a different view toward Aideed's

²² John C. Harrison, *The Limits of Type D Coercive Diplomacy in Somalia*, Masters Thesis at the Naval Post Graduate School, December 1995, p.45.

forces as did the Italians.²³ These countries were fenced off from US intelligence because of their involvement with the Somalis.²⁴

The additional mission to capture Aideed created a separation between UN and US forces. Since the hunt was no longer in multi-national hands, TF Ranger needed its own QRF. Critics address the need for other nations to feel like part of the team but for the duration of the search that was impossible. At the same time limitations of the CAP on personnel for Task Force Ranger left it vulnerable in force structure. The servicemen were US, pursuing a unilateral mission under US command, therefore, the US political process should have been sensitive to their needs.

The mothers and fathers of America will give you their sons and daughters...with the confidence in you that you will not needlessly waste their lives. And you dare not. That's the burden the mantle of leadership places upon you. You could be the person who gives the orders that will bring about the deaths of thousands and thousands of young men and women. It is an awesome responsibility. You cannot fail. You dare not fail.²⁵

Several sources are quoted that the President was surprised when he was told of the raid the third of October 1993.²⁶ Be that as it may, The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJSC), Gen. Colin Powell, was instrumental in limiting the forces. He felt that tanks were too much for this situation as described in the review of the mission conducted by the Senate.

Troop levels for the US were not sufficient for the Aideed missions. Under UNITAF there were 28,000 US soldiers in the UN force. At the time the mission was expanded under UNOSOM II, US troop levels had dropped to around 4,500. Of these there were roughly 3,000 logistics personnel and 1,150 QRF soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division.²⁷ More troops had

²³ Confidential source interview.

²⁴ Confidential source interview.

²⁵ General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, remark from the speech given in Eisenhower Hall Theater to the Corps of Cadets on 15 May 1991.

less missions, while later less troops attempted more missions. This illustrates the lack of continuity between the political and military missions.

Current doctrine, not available at the time, states that force should be the last resort for peace enforcement operations. Commanders are tasked to de-escalate and not inflame whenever possible.²⁸

Mohammed Aided was a French trained general officer, in the army prior to the civil war. "He is no stranger to military tactics; he is, and was, no fool."²⁹ He was an educated and eloquent opponent, deserving of respect. Referring to Aided as a "terrorist" was a misassessment. He was conducting operations in a much more noble way than his Bosnian counterparts of the same time period. Politically, his issues were with the UN, not the US, but his pursuit by the US discredited the US presence.³⁰ He maintained relations with the original envoy of Ambassador Oakley and on the withdrawal he began renegotiating. Aided in this instance appears to have the unity of command and effort.

Many mistakenly try to explain the hunt for Aided as mission creep. The UN mission never changed to hunt Aided but remained as previously stated: conduct military operations to maintain a secure environment for humanitarian assistance. The original goal of Ambassador Oakley during UNOSOM I was to cooperate with the warlords until the US could hand over operations to the UN. TF Ranger was sent to capture Aided. This was not mission creep but a

²⁶ Elizabeth Drew, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1994, p.243. Allegations of President Clinton's knowledge of the operation was further questioned in the Senate Hearings, 103rd Congress, Second Session, 12, 21 May 1994, S. HRG. 103-846, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994, p. 71.

²⁷ Allard, p. 19.

²⁸ Peace Keeping Doctrine, on the internet at <http://Carlisle-www.army.mil/usaesl/pki/100-23.htm>

²⁹ Senate Memorandum 33, p. 7.

³⁰ Harrison, p. 37.

tangential operation. It also had implications to US commitment within the UN mission.³¹ The surgical removal of Aideed the "problem" rather than negotiating was advised against by several levels in CENTCOM. Political and military goals became inconsistent. The overall pressure by UNOSOM II was beginning to erode not only Aideed's power but the other factions as well. The consequence was to cause cooperation between factions.³² Some feel that Aideed decided to kill Americans not to weaken the UNOSOM II force militarily, but to intimidate the leadership in the US and cause a withdrawal. They may be correct.

Deconfliction of outside missions was done very well by Task Force Ranger. General Garrison, the commander of Task Force Ranger, systematically called MG Montgomery before conducting any operation. This was to alert the QRF and to deconflict missions in the area if needed. NGOs were included in the deconfliction. Other deconfliction procedures used were liaisons with the QRF and Task Force Ranger. Each of the units had personnel collocated in each command post.³³

The need to address the tenets of army operations from FM 100-5 is relevant. Versatility, depth, and synchronization are extremely important and change little when applied to special operations. Versatility is absolutely necessary in all operations. The commander must be able to shift from one mission to another rapidly and effectively. To do so, he must be equipped to operate with depth. By depth is meant that to the commander's campaign planning must envision simultaneous activities and sequential stages all the way to solutions. Had multiple hotspots occurred the night of the third of October 1993, there is little doubt the situation would have been far worse. The UNOSOM II assets were barely sufficient for humanitarian missions, let alone

³¹ Tagney interview.

³² Harrison, p.44 -45.

³³ Col. Nash, Task Force Ranger S-3, interview conducted 30 October 1996, approx. 25 minutes.

peace enforcement operations. A great deal depended on the number of casualties that the US was willing to incur. The assets for the Task Force Ranger mission were in question for all aspects of its mission. Combining the personnel CAP with the lack of armor or gunship protection quickly reduce its capacity for specialized operations. This reduction in specialization limited the unit to conventional operations. Therefore a backup plan should have been seen as a conventional operation. Impartiality of the command structure seems to have played an important part in the failure to see the need. Discussions with the operations officer revealed the want of additional equipment. Task Force Ranger requested AC-130 support but it was denied until after eighteen Americans were killed. Gunship support would have made a difference by adding massive firepower to the ground forces. TF Ranger had practiced with AC-130s and its absence hurt. Gunship support might also have opened up additional relief routes into the objective area.

Full synchronization means a complete understanding between all parties in the operation. Synchronization must be axionmatic with Special Forces operations. Beyond that the overall strategic and political context of the operation demanded an awareness of an area's history, economy, culture, and any other significant factors that could influence the mission. The need to know the clan culture was one such important factor. Aideed's power gained momentum from his mystical elusiveness in avoiding capture. Again questions arise regarding Task Force Rangers style of operations and the number of attempts made to capture him. No matter how many times the helicopters were flown on "conditioning" flights to maintain surprise, nevertheless the enemy learns.

The delay of the QRF may never be explained in detail but I believe from the interviews conducted that after the first crash site was secured, Task Force Ranger was able to reconsolidate. This reconsolidation gave them a second wind and they probably believe that they

regained the initiative. The QRF was not immediately called for because the units believed they had enough internal reserve. The supposedly regained initiative appears to have given a false sense of security for the force.

E. ANALYSIS OF SIMPLICITY

Properly compartmentalized operations are difficult but not impossible.

Compartmentalization for security has advantages but the goal is to save lives, not risk them. MG Garrison felt that the working relationship with the QRF was adequate for the situation.³⁴ The QRF was only a few miles from the actual area but the terrain led through the heart of the city. Many questions arose later with regards to the time lag. Had the QRF been directly under the control of Task Force Ranger commander and with the correct mobility and fighting composition, time would have been saved. Had the QRF continued on the first attempt to reach the task force, lives may have been saved. Several different routes were tried before the QRF actually fought through to the crash site. Allard addresses the qualitative difference in the multinational force but not its operational limitations. Even more to the point, the qualitative difference should not have entered this situation, because the American forces conducted a unilateral operation under American command. No matter what ADM Howe thought of Aideed, he owed a commitment to careful planning of how to handle the situation at hand.

The weaknesses of this are similar to those observed in the Pacora River Bridge battle in Just Cause. Success entailed a simple, quick operation, relying on speed, and consisting of a fast advance to the objective area with light forces followed by a fast exit. The idea of being bogged down in a lengthy engagement seemed not to have been considered. This was short sighted on the part of the task force planners. The aim of simplicity may have led to a lack of preparedness

³⁴ MG Garrison, interview conducted at Fort Bragg on or about 20 April 1996, length approx. 30 minutes.

for this mission. Planners are taught to expect the worst and plan accordingly. TF Ranger lacked this type of plan.

The mission on the 3rd of October was successful up to the exfiltration from the area. The Somalis were able to hit the first aircraft using tactics similar to the Viet Cong. Repetition of the operations in style of previous attempts to capture Aideed may be part of the reason the same tactics worked again on the second helicopter and had worked nine days earlier on another helicopter in a nearby area. Even inept opponents learn to cope with repetitive enemy tactics.

F. ANALYSIS OF TIMING

The issues of timing are relatively uncomplicated. The first issue centered on a lack of awareness of the amount of interference being caused by the raids by Task Force Ranger. In the early attempts, the level of tolerance displayed by the Somalis is fairly high. Little else changed but as the raids continued, Somali intolerance of UN and US troops grew. As the operations continued it was only a matter of time until the Somalis tired of these actions.

The second problem, seen in past operations but not heeded, was the amount of time that would be required to actually capture Aideed. In Panama, Noriega was disliked and it still took five days to capture him. Here in a country where the individual was respected, there was a great deal of wishful thinking to believe that TF Ranger operations would be a quick solution. Aideed may not have been liked but he was powerful and gaining respect each time he eluded our well-equipped posse.

Surprise was lost after the first few attempts were made to capture Aideed. He learned our tactics and knew how to avoid his pursuers. Near misses and close calls do not count; only his capture. MG Garrison kept air traffic moving constantly to keep the surprise factor. He

personally felt that these routine flights gave them the edge in deception that we needed. This is questionable. His opponent was well trained and educated, which would tend to imply the ability to adapt to the situation at hand.

The timing of the entire operation seems upside down. It began with overwhelming force and ended up in a small-scale piecemeal effort. A slow withdrawal is escalation in reverse. De-escalation should not leave the units lacking the ability to conduct vital operations safely. The UN was expanding its operation while the US was reducing its presence. But the Americans were not prepared for October 3rd. By then they believed the US effort was humanitarian and not combat. The political ineptness displayed illustrates the lack of understanding for the task at hand.

G. CONCLUSIONS

In peace operations, soldiers are not sure how far away combat really is. All their operations, no matter what the mission, should be organized to shift rapidly from a non-violent mission to a violent one. The Weinberger doctrine, if applied to UNOSOM II and Task Force Ranger, forcefully illustrates how the lack of a clear "end state" can cripple an operation.³⁵

It is hard to understand the finger pointing and blame passing caused by the lack of sound military decisions in this instance. US leadership tasked military units to perform a mission that judging from history was extremely difficult. The unit performed very well within its own sphere of influence. Its capability was lacking from both political and military support.

³⁵ Weinberger Doctrine as it became known was introduced by former Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, it stated six tests to determine whether US forces should be sent into combat: Is a vital national interest at stake? Will we commit sufficient resources to win? Will we sustain the commitment? Are the objectives clearly defined? Is there reasonable expectation that the public and Congress will support the operation? Have we exhausted our other options?

The QRF of the United Nations was not capable of the job at hand for UNOSOM II. Nor were UN multi-national force capabilities sufficient across the board. US planners knew this, yet did not compensate for it. US planners poorly conceived the Somalia operation in its entirety. The 3 October mission lacked a clear exfiltration plan in case of emergency. SOF units tend to work with lightly equipped forces but in this operation they needed GPF back up in the QRF. Yet the commanders on the ground in TF Ranger were not familiar with mechanized forces and probably would not have planned on their use had they been available. MG Garrison so stated in the Senate hearings.

The late request for armor is no alibi for poor decisions at the NCA level. Rejection of previous requests for necessary forces was given to the US command on the ground in Somalia. During Desert One, US SOF was not equipped for the tasks at hand. Here in Somalia the resources were available and had been utilized previously. A capable QRF package could have been present and under Task Force Ranger control.

A change of mission requires reevaluation of the resources to conduct it. Fluctuating force structures caused a void in the capabilities of the UN and allowed casualties. Initially, the Bush administration chose a wise path and sent overwhelming forces to accomplish the task. That phase was successful. But the lack of a clear "end state" left the UN and US on opposite sides. The consequence was that the US wanted to pull out while the UN expanded the operational goals but lacked the muscle to achieve them.

The Clinton administration's tolerance for inadequately equipped troops seems to place the blame in the political sphere of influence. Nevertheless, the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff (CJCS) is the first military link to the political process. Whoever fills that position owes SOF and GPF soldiers the right task organization. The CJCS had espoused the utilization of more

than adequate forces in previous operations and supported the requests of his ground commanders. In Somalia this was overruled. Limiting the use of force is a necessary evil of all military endeavors. However, limits on the use of force are fundamentally different from providing for the adequate number and type of military units. Moreover, in Somalia limits on the use of force led to a change in the balance of power in the region. Troop reductions are unavoidable and create a hazardous situation as forces prepare to leave. Their composition should be maintained to protect themselves and that right should be maintained regardless of multi-national pressure. The families of the eighteen servicemen will never fully understand how their sons were allowed to be killed for humanitarian reasons.

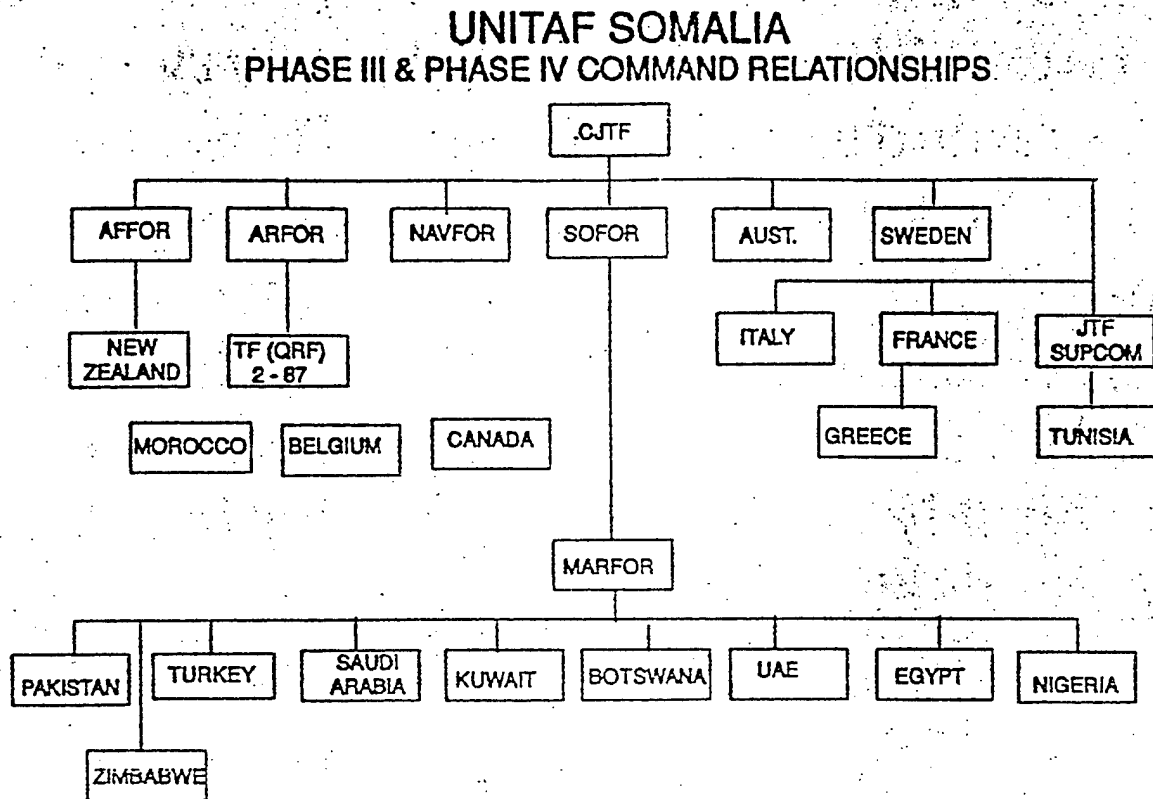


Figure 5.1 Organizational Chart - Somalia, UNITAF AND UNISOM, Kenneth Allard et al., *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*.

UNISOM II AND USFORSOM

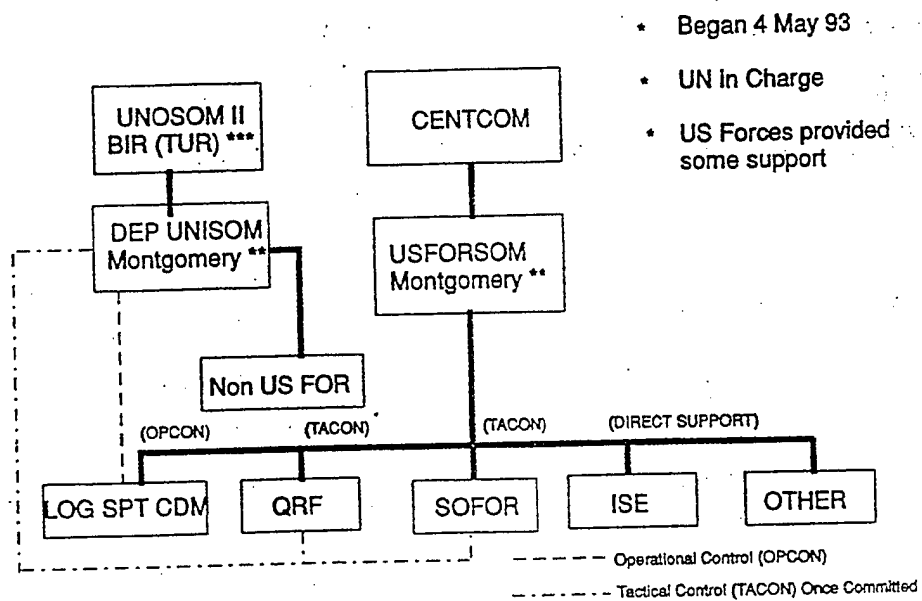


Figure 5.2 Organizational Chart, UNITAF, From Kenneth Allard.

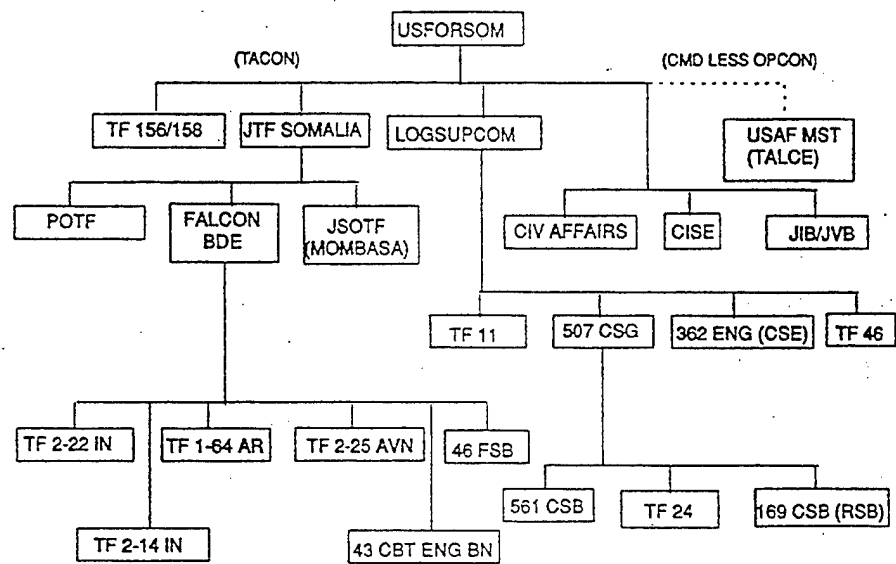


Figure 5.3 Organizational Chart, USFORSOM, October 1993, From Kenneth Allard.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. THOUGHTS

In the beginning I thought I would find flaws in USSOCOM as a command structure. This stemmed from my lack of knowledge about it. As my research progressed, I saw how many beneficial effects USSOCOM had on military operations and that it was not a command structure at all. It is only a resourcing tool that effectively controlled the parts pertaining to the units.

The main question was about USSOCOM's effectiveness. The bottom line is that it proved to be very effective. It was not a combatant command. But it provided the theater commanders with a well equipped and trained force to execute nearly all the missions assigned to them.

Solutions to problems lie in the tried and true variables of unity of command, unity of effort, simplicity, and timing. This paper has attempted to illustrate how these principles can be applied to operations and influence the outcome. Commanders and managers cannot oversee everything. They must have trained staffs that are able to work in the joint arena. We do not fully have these staffs as yet.

The military has many well trained members within its ranks but that is not enough for the range and complexity of the new age which the military will operate. They must execute missions jointly in the "purple environment". The era of the "Cold Peace" is a troubling time because of the lack of a defined enemy. Our only true enemy is ourselves by not taking the time available to better integrate our forces.

B. SYNOPSIS

Desert One, and Grenada were the new beginnings of SOF. Desert One emphasized the change. This change was for equipment and the establishment of trained SOF units capable of executing United States National policies. We observed ill-equipped and ill-trained personnel attempting missions with little more than desire. In pieces or as separate units they could operate, but they were limited in their knowledge of the capabilities of other services. Joining disparate units proved that there was a void of knowledge regarding one another.

Desert One showed the growth of SOF to what we now have today. Desert One's mistakes influenced today's equipment and set standards from which to utilize in our future.

Grenada saw the fielding of new equipment, and the first attempt at using newer technology, but it operated under yet another ramshackle command structure. Failures at the operational level can be attributed in part to hasty planning and the assignment of unrehearsed forces when better rehearsed forces were available. Still, it must be borne in mind that rapid action was crucial.

Poor integration led to mishaps with the insertion of forces on the initial landings and the dissemination of inadequate information to different service units. Daylight infiltration caused a lack of surprise. The lack of correct intelligence for units departing the US caused soldiers to arrive unprepared. After the initial surprise was lost, the SOF units became just another set of GPF units.

Grenada was a no notice operation meaning little or no preparation was made to prepare for the operation. Operation "Urgent Fury" was unable to operate effectively because of its lack of interoperability. Parochialism and a lack of impartiality caused a severe lack of integration.

Equipment was new but personnel lacked the ability to integrate it. All services wanted to participate and did so under the command of individuals who lacked knowledge of the capabilities of the other assembled units. The command might have proved effective, but was hindered by the parochialism of the commanders.

Panama was truly the first successful operation conducted in many years. But it to had its short-comings. The desired outcome of the operation was lacking in the plan. Seizing the country was the part of military operations we knew how to do, but it was the recreation of the infrastructure that was forgotten. This operation was also greatly influenced by the partiality or parochialism of the commander. Hostages became the priority and the other missions became secondary. It is understandable now to realize how the emphasis was rearranged, but during the operation the exclusion of other well trained joint participants at senior levels left no honest broker to mediate and coordinate among the various service units.

Somalia left the military and the public aware of what constituted combat. Images of the technological victory in the Gulf quickly raised doubts about the effectiveness of the military in the Somalia operation. Military answers failed to solve political problems. Somalia errors were avoidable. Care can be taken to ensure military and political goals are obtainable. Equipment was available, personnel were trained but the influence of a few people in the right place within the US government outweighed the better judgment of the military on the ground. Once again a lack of impartiality greatly influenced the operations conduct.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The one area that is not changeable with a quick after action review (AAR) or a low cost solution is teaching impartiality and objectivity. Impartiality is not something that is just fixed. Soldiers rely on the knowledge acquired early in their careers. We must begin integrating our

forces at the company grade level. Officers and enlisted must be able to understand acronyms and procedures including hand signals for all services before real world operations are conducted in the future.

Our “lessons learned system” is not efficient. Think for a minute how this system operates: AARs are written then they are stripped of the individual writers emotion and made to be a lesson for all. Then the AARs are massed into a file and called “lessons learned”. Tailoring the words are understandable but much meaning is lost in the translation of the facts. In all of the operations the same lessons learned were previously listed in AARs and analyses. Why then were there problems? This is demonstrated in the impartiality and parochialism of the commanders and their organizations. Change is hard to accept especially within the organizational structure of the military and political organizations.

Utilization of lessons learned is not done by all levels of the military. We as military professionals are treating our profession as a job not as an art. The implementation of military operations is an art. Young officers could be trained on the AARs of these operations very cost effectively. Modifying the US Army training at Fort Leavenworth, for example, could allow senior military officers the chance to review a one hour lesson learned that could benefit those officers and influence their decisions in future operations. These lectures need to emphasize the things we do wrong. Things done right are always disseminated but in most of the publications reviewed during this work, I found few listings of problems in open sources. Consequently, these problems were seen in the subsequent operations as shortfalls. An example being communications in Grenada was seen again in Somalia. Hospital ships were unable to communicate with ground troops for long periods and this was previously seen in Grenada between Army and Navy units.

SOF needs wider dissemination of accomplishments within the military. During Just Cause, the Ma Bell operations involving the seizures of cuartels, was virtually untold to the rest of the military. This was an innovative way of approaching the mission at hand. It demonstrated the cultural knowledge of the Special Forces soldiers and allowed minimal collateral damage. Along with this example, others such as the many examples of foreign internal defense missions conducted by SOF personnel with nations around the world are conveniently down played but highlighted with GPF units. Operations prior to October 1993 in Somalia were conducted by SOF and are still largely unknown. The insular outlook of SOF must be reduced and better relations built to facilitate operations with general purpose forces.

SOF must fight as it trains. We must practice in the same configurations as we will work under actual conditions. This would be possible at NTC as joint endeavors with all services being represented.

SOF will need to resist the temptation to get into every operation. There are plenty of missions available and rushing into them can be dangerous. The "can do" attitude can become "just do it". Over-reliance on reputation can cause SOF to act in the "just do it" mode exposing them to severe violations of basic principles. In Somalia, the Task Force Ranger operations lacked solid basic foundations not only in force organization but within the planning of the distinct phases of the operation. Insertion, execution and exfiltration were not treated equally during the planning.

Careful training early in the careers of personnel can effect their partiality. Training learning from past mistakes and implementing the lessons into joint exercises with all services could diminished the problems revealed in this study. Training must not be used for judging a leader's performance. We are not allowing leaders to take risks in training and make mistakes

that give a solid basis to judge future missions. We must look back at our own past and remember our mistakes and not expect perfection from our subordinates when inadequacies of command, and control are at fault. We call this leadership and not management.

Too many of our operations are judged by the number of US casualties rather than the effectiveness of the operation. The desired outcome is not weighed by casualties and this must be understood. Policy therefore must delineate the acceptance of casualties so that avoidance of casualties does not control the outcome. Again, leadership is called for in explaining the realities of combat operations to the Congress, the media and the public. Without public support born of understanding, our missions are futile.

D. FUTURE STUDIES

Other possible areas of interest that could be beneficial to military operations and political goals could be as follows:

A study of what numbers of casualties are acceptable to the American people?

The Desegregation of Special Operations Forces and General Purpose Forces (this deals with the breaking of barriers to interoperability by finding out where they are located within the command structure)

A study of learned experiences early in the careers of senior military and political leaders and its affect on how they judge or mis-interpret future situations based on their past.

The Organizational congruence of Joint Special Operations Command and operations involving it.

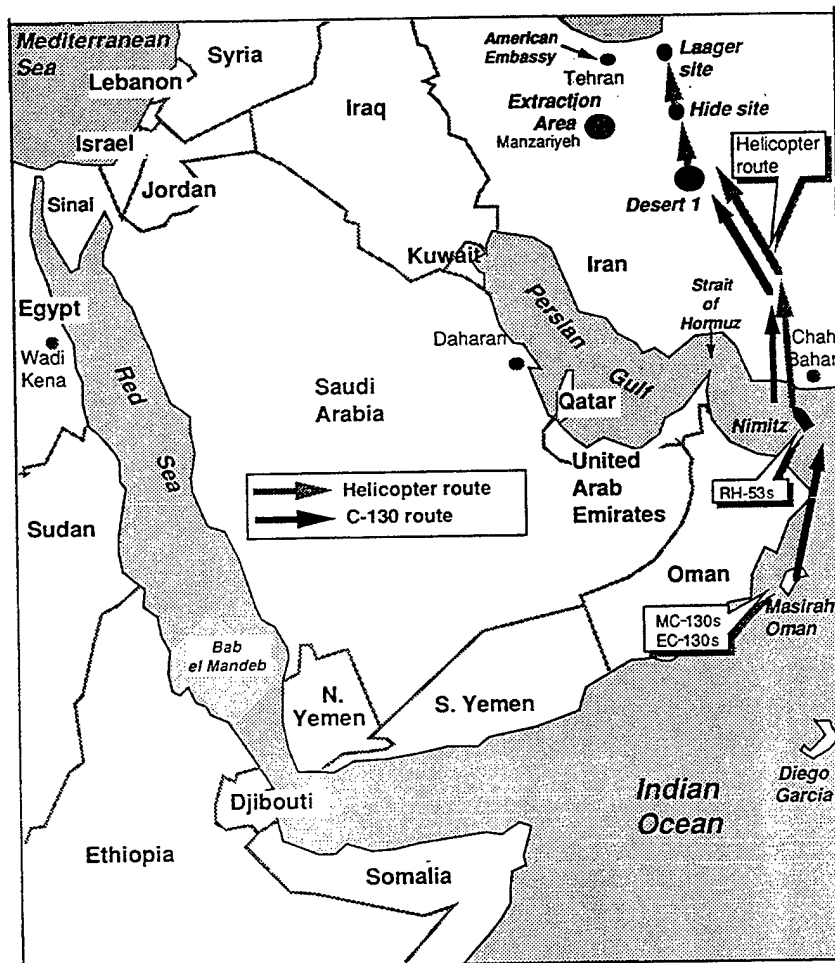
An education program for the military to teach the difference between limitations and capabilities.

Writing historical perspective of past operations utilizing surviving personnel. This should encompass people such as Col Arron Bank and others still available to educate us.

An evaluation of direct action and foreign internal defense missions. This study should look at these missions from the area of a unit possessing the skills necessary to execute direct action skills and their ability to execute FID with less training than the converse. An example

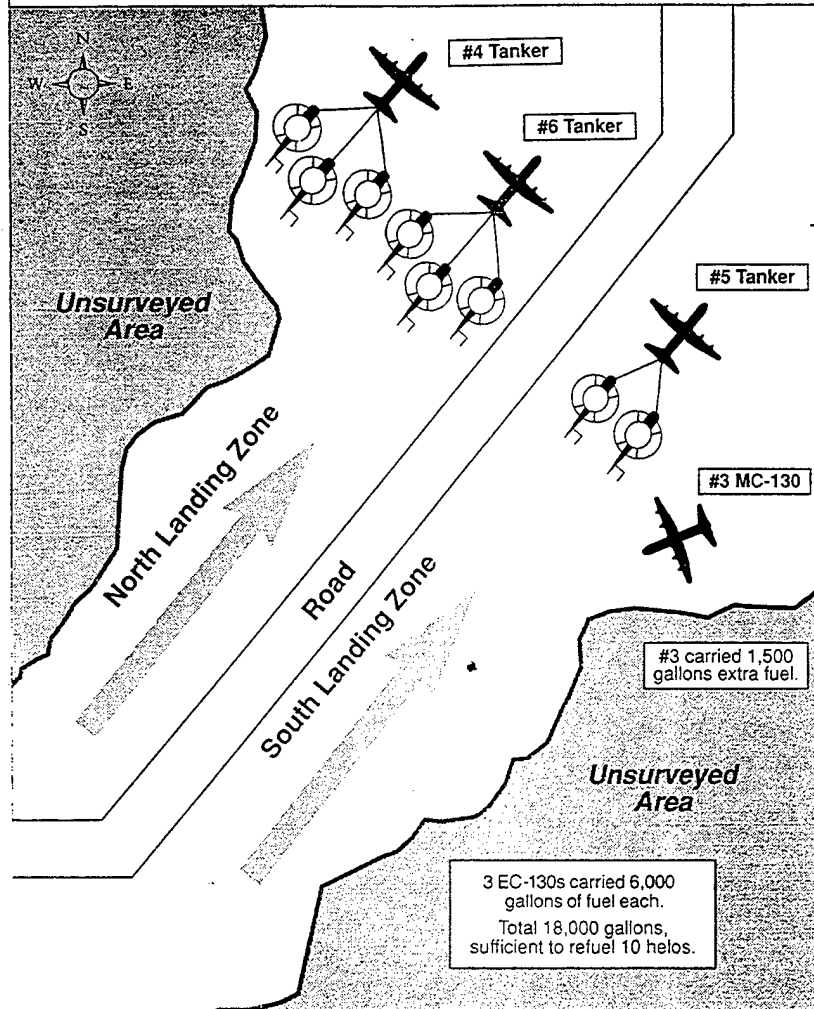
would be the comparison of teachers and doers. Few finance teachers are millionaires and few physical education teachers are athletes. The answers may reveal a correlation between certain skills or characteristics.

APPENDIX MAPS

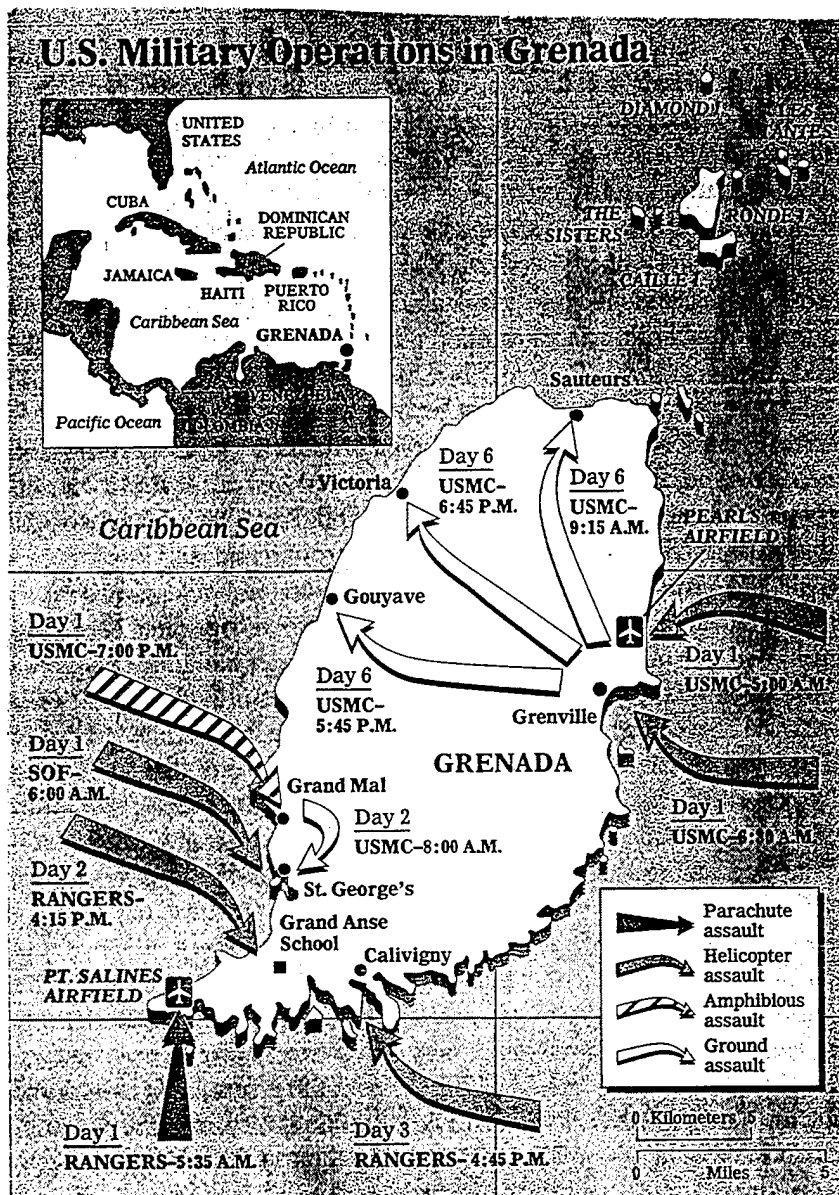


MAP 2-1 Flight Route - Desert One, James Kyle, *Guts to Try*.

Helicopter Refueling Plan

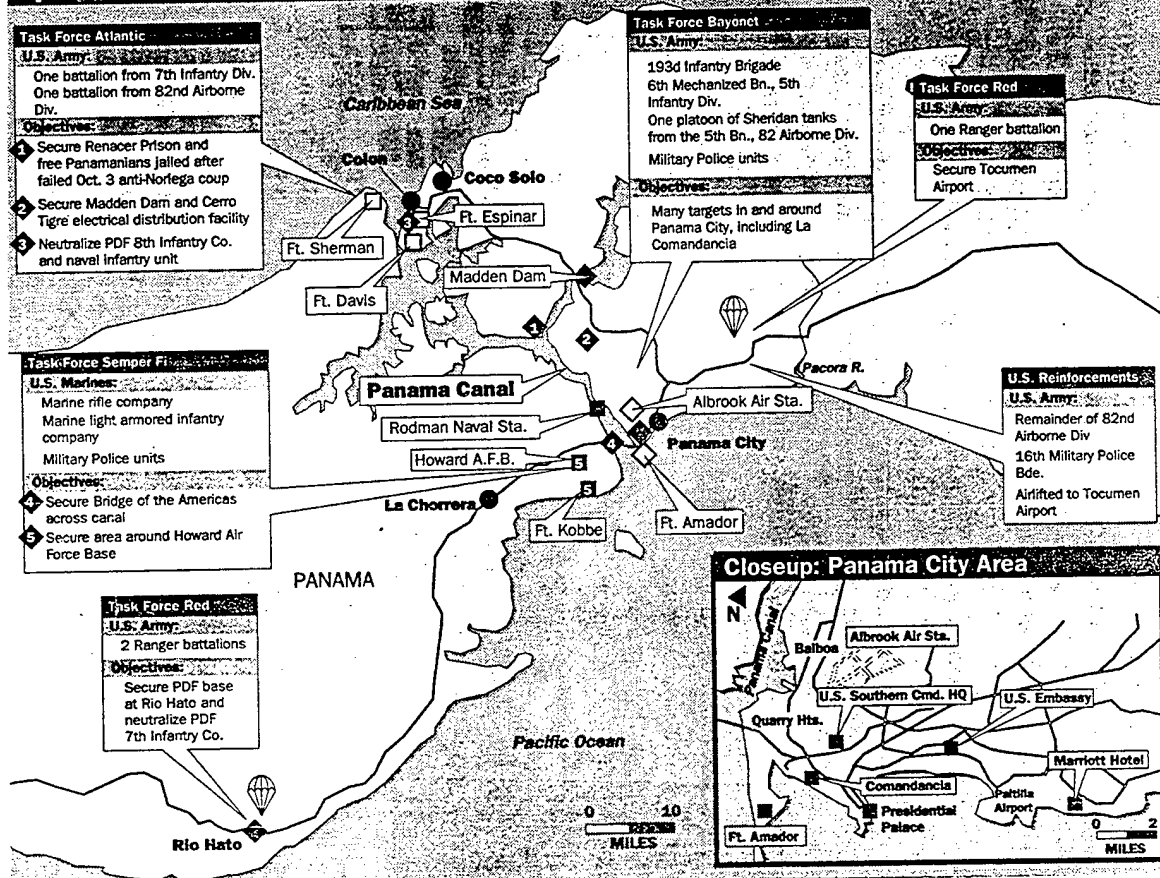


MAP 2-2 Desert One - Refuel Plan, James Kyle, *Guts to Try*.



MAP 3-1 Military Operations - Grenada, Peter Petre, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*.

Operation Just Cause: H-Hour Targets



MAP 4-1 Operation Just Cause - H-Hour Targets, From Thomas Donnell, *Operation Just Cause*.

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A special thanks to the United States Marine Corps, the Special Operations Training Group (SOTG) unit, and their commander LTCOL Jeff Powers and many others at Camp Pendelton for their effort in assisting me.

Additionally interviewed were: LTCOL Rex P. Blankenhorn, SSGT Kevin P. Daly, SSGT Eric Rubinek, SSGT Kerry P. Wisnieski, SGT Chad E. Carlson.

Cheney, Dick, March 1996, Naval Post Graduate School and phone interview, lengths of interviews approximately 60 minutes.

Clevland, Charles T., LTC, Operations Officer for 7th SFG(A) during Operation Just Cause, telephone interview approximate length 25 minutes.

Dotto, Peter, Col USMC, Military liaison with Ambassador Oakley in Somalia, approximate length of interview 55 minutes.

Escalderon, SGT Jeffrey V. and Mitchell, SGT Travis S., USMC snipers, interview conducted at Camp Pendelton on 17-18 October 1996.

Etnyre, Robb, USMC Officer, General's aide, approximate length of interview 25 minutes.

Fister, Bruce, LTG(Ret), Air Force Officer for Operations Grenada and Just Cause, interview at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Flornoy, Michele, member of the team set to investigate lessons learned by les Aspin.

Garrison, William, MG(Ret), Task Force Ranger Commander, interview at Fort Bragg approximate length 30 minutes.

Grange, David BG, interview conducted in April 1996 at Fort Bragg, NC.

Higgins, Kevin, LTC, Commander of the Pacora River Bridge during Operation Just Cause, in person interview approximate length 1.5 hours.

Hobson, James L., MG, Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Commander, telephone interview approximate length 25 minutes.

Hoivik, Thomas, former commander of the Rh-53 unit utilized in the operation, interview conducted on 9 Aug 1996.

McDonald, Daniel, SSG, team member on Pacora River Bridge, interviewed fall of 1996.

Murphy, Kevin, Maj, Part of the initial units sent to be liaison with 10th Mountain Division, approximate length of interview 1.5 hours.

Nash, Col, Nash was the Task Force Ranger Operations Officer, approximate length 35 minutes.

O'Niell, Stuart K. S., he was an SGT/E-5 on the Iran operation, 2 August 1996, approx. length of interview 40 minutes.

Schoomaker, Peter, LTG, US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), Commander, telephone interview, approximate length 45 minutes.

Stiner, Carl, LTG(Ret), Commander of Just Cause, approximate length of interview 55 minutes.

Tagney, Peter, BG, CENTCOM Commander, telephone interview approximate length 35 minutes.

Trumble, Roy, Col, Commander of the School of Americas, telephone interview approximate length 30 minutes.

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